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HOURS WITH THE BIBLE

OR

THE SCRIPTURES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN DISCOVERY
AND KNOWLEDGE

BY

John CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D., 1824-1906.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND WORDS OF CHRIST"

VOL. I

FROM CREATION TO THE PATRIARCHS

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TO THE RIGHT HON. AND MOST REVEREND

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL TAIT,

NINETY-SECOND ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, AND METROPOLITAN, ETC., ETC., ETC.

WITH SINCERE RESPECT.

PREFACE.

CERVANTES says of one of his characters, that he was "as kind a man as ever trod on shoe leather; mighty good to the poor; * ■ main friend to all honest people, and had a face like a benediction." It is because I believe all this literally true of the Archbishop of Canterbury that I inscribe this book to him; for any approach to insincerity would be alike unworthy of him and of myself. The record of his inner life in that most touching book, "Catherine and Craufurd Tait," justifies the earlier clauses, and no one who has seen him can dispute the last.

For the name I have chosen—"Hours with the Bible"—I am indebted to my old friend, the Rev. W. Calvert, Vicar of St. Peter's, Lordship Lane. He may perhaps

* By a strange chance I read to-day in the paper: "On Thursday last, the Archbishop of Canterbury entertained 600 of the poor of Lambeth to tea in the Library of the Palace. The company, including many of the blind of the neighbourhood, then assembled in the Palace grounds, where they were made glad by the bright and cheerful conversation and singing of the Archbishop's three daughters. At eight o'clock the evening hymn was sung, and his Grace gave his blessing to all present. On leaving, each visitor received a bunch of beautiful flowers."

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HOURS WITH THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

GENESIS.

THE Hebrew Scriptures were originally grouped into three sections, the Law, the Prophets, and the remaining miscellaneous compositions; the first embracing the five Books of Moses; the second, the historical books, from Joshua to Second Kings, the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets; the third including the rest of the canon.

Of these, the first five books, or The Law, were always regarded as one great whole, and hence are constantly spoken of as such by the sacred writers. But for the present we have to do only with the opening section.

The name Genesis, or the Beginning, is simply the Greek equivalent for the first word in the Hebrew Text, which, after having been from time immemorial used by the Jews as a title for the book, was adopted by the translators of the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Old Testament, begun in the third century before Christ.

Aside from its higher claims as part of divine Revelation, the extreme antiquity of Genesis gives it a surpassing value. Its composition has been assigned by

the Jews, from the earliest ages, to Moses, and modern controversy has done nothing to shake this belief, though it has shown that the great lawgiver made use, as might have been expected, of documents ancient even in his day, and has, perhaps, pointed out, here and there, minute additions of a later hand. But this also was only what must naturally have happened, for the sacred books would doubtless be annotated and revised as was needed in the course of ages, by some of "the holy men of old," in the schools of the prophets, "who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

As a whole, Genesis stands at the head of the literature of the world—the very oldest book now in existence. The earliest known writings that compete in any measure with it are those so wonderfully recovered in late years from the ruins of Assyria and the tombs of Egypt, but neither the Euphrates nor the Nile has given us anything that will compare in manifold value, far less in spiritual grandeur, with this Hebrew relic. Perhaps the very oldest writing extant is the papyrus known as the Instructions of Ptahhotep, or The Proverbs of Aphobis,¹ but it is only a string of platitudes, often trivial, and never rising above a very humble level. It is curious and touching to read in it a lament dating from the days of Abraham, over old age, as every way miserable, and there is shrewd worldly sense as well as kindness in such counsel as—"If thou be wise furnish thy house well: woo thy wife and do not quarrel with her; nourish her; deck her out, for fine dress is her greatest delight. Perfume her, make her glad, as long as thou livest: she is a blessing which her possessor should treat as becomes

¹ It has been translated under the former name into French by M. Chabas; under the latter into English, by the Rev. Dunbar Heath. Lauth has translated it into German.

his own standing. Be not unkind to her." But no one will think of ranking such a composition with Genesis. Nor are the later Egyptian records preserved to us any more worthy of being so, as will be seen hereafter.¹

Assyria has bequeathed us in the clay tablets of her Royal Library a vast collection of documents copied from others of a date at least as early as that of Moses, but they are valuable only for their illustrations of the superstitions, the civilization, and the life of a remote age,² or for their incidental corroborations of Scripture.

The design of Genesis is, indeed, itself, enough to show the immeasurable superiority of this first revealed book to all other remains of primeval literature. From the opening to the close it has an aim which sets it far above all uninspired productions. It is an introduction to the history of the dealings of God with man, which forms the ruling theme of the whole Scriptures.

Human interests and occupations of all kinds are touched in the development of this one great subject, but they are noticed only as they bear on it, and always in strict subordination to it. The first chapter of the Bible prepares the way for it by revealing the supreme fact that there is but One Only and Living God, the moral Governor of the Universe: reigning in unquestioned majesty over all things; the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the God of the spirits of all flesh. Then follows the sad story of man's fall which needs Divine

¹ The reader will find illustrations of ancient Egyptian literature copiously given in Maspero's *Histoire Ancienne*.

² See Tiele, *Die Assyriologie und ihre Ergebnisse für die Vergleichende Religionsgeschichte*, passim. Lenormant's *La Magie chez les Chaldéens*, and his *La Divination, etc., etc.* Paris, 1874 and 1875. *Early Babylonian History*, by G. Smith. *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 5.

intervention to secure his restoration, and thus the way is opened to tell the story of that heavenly mediation for our good. A few chapters more link the earlier periods of the world with later times, and bring before us the first step in the re-establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, by the selection of the family of Abraham as the depositary of the true religion, for future ages, and the instrument of their spiritual education. How the narrative henceforth follows on, introducing the successive generations of the patriarchs, to the settlement of their posterity in Egypt, we all know.

It throws a mysterious grandeur over the book of Genesis when we look at it in its relations to Scripture as a whole. Exodus takes up the narrative of the chosen people where the earlier book has left it; Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua carry it on to the final settlement in Canaan. The book of Judges and those that follow lead us through eventful centuries, echoing with the psalms and thanksgivings of the faithful, but also with the denunciations of prophets, till, with Malachi, the canon is closed, as the fulness of time approaches for the final development of God's gracious purposes of mercy. Springing up at distant intervals through more than a thousand years; written in widely different states of society and culture; with men of all ranks, from the eastern king to the simple herdsman, among their authors, all the books of Scripture are found linked to each other in a mysterious harmony of tone and aim; the last completing what all the rest have slowly advanced. Genesis is thus the porch of the great temple of Revelation, leading, step by step to the disclosure of Jesus Christ as the Lord and Head of the new kingdom of God, restored by Him among men, after having been lost in Eden. Scripture proves throughout

to be only so many notes in a Divine harmony which culminates in the angel-song over Bethlehem. What less than Divine inspiration could have evolved such unity of purpose and spirit in the long series of sacred writers, no one of whom could possibly be conscious of the part he was being made to take in the development of God's ways to our race? ¹

But while thus unique in its relation to the history of redemption, Genesis incidentally yields the richest attractions in subordinate details. It gives us glimpses of ancient life more than a thousand years before Herodotus, "the Father of History," was born.² The plains of Mesopotamia, the hills and uplands of Palestine, the pastures of the South, and the banks of the Nile, in succession, come before us, with their varied populations, customs, and productions. We wander with shepherd tribes in the desert; see the town life of the ancient communities of Palestine, and the court life of Egypt in the opening period of its greatest glory. Nor are these notices of ages so remote, of doubtful accuracy, and thus of questionable worth. The lengthened references to Egyptian life are demonstrated to be minutely correct, by the evidence of the monuments and documents of these early days which Egypt itself has bequeathed us. The glimpses of ancient races are incidentally corroborated by every advance of knowledge from other sources; the pictures of primitive shepherd life are sustained to the full by the unchanging pastoral customs of the East, even now. Nor is the history given us in Genesis like the pompous inscriptions of equal antiquity left in Egypt or Babylon. Instead of lists of victories and sounding

¹ Ewald, in his *Christus*, has a fine passage on this.

² Herodotus and Nehemiah, the writer of the last historical book in the canon, were both alive in B.C. 444.

titles of kings, we have the everyday life of the populations; the light and shadow of human hopes and fears, the flesh and blood forms of beings like ourselves, though separated from us by forty centuries. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and a crowd of other personages introduced, are as real as if they had lived but yesterday.

One great feature of Scripture from its first page to its last should endear it, not only to the professedly religious, but to every one who cares for the welfare of humanity at large. It is the characteristic of all other writings of antiquity that they utterly fail to realize the dignity of man, as man, and ignore the existence of *the people*, except as a mere background to the deeds and glory of the dignified few. In Egypt the masses were held in contempt by the great, as the "stinking multitude," and we search in vain in Egyptian inscriptions and literature for any generous sentiment towards them, or any recognition of their rights or importance in the State. In Asia, from the remotest times, even the high officers of the sovereign have been content to call themselves his slaves. It has been for him to command and for all his subjects passively to obey his every caprice. In ancient Greece the citizens formed a privileged few,—the mass of their fellow-countrymen counted for nothing; and it was the same in Rome till citizenship was extended to all Italy, in B.C. 90, after the Social War, to the unspeakable mortification of the great patrician party. Thus, it marks antiquity everywhere, that privilege alone conferred nationality in any true sense, and that the commonalty at large were treated as a mere herd, of whom no notice was to be taken as having any rights in the State.

In Scripture, however, including the book of Genesis, there breathes a higher spirit of liberty and respect to

man. Instead of giving pompous recitals of the deeds of conquerors and kings, it follows the history of simple patriarchs and their households. Amidst the slavish splendours of Egypt it dwells on the fortunes of an humble shepherd tribe. That there be loyalty towards the One Living God is enough to raise even the exiled Jacob to a prominence in it that is not assigned to rank or power. It enters the shepherd's tent; it follows him in his simple occupations; it turns aside from the palaces of Zoan to bend its regards on the lowly inmates of the Hebrew slave-quarter around. It sees no charms in the merely outward and accidental; the spiritual and essential alone are valued. If these be found on a throne, its occupant has corresponding notice, but if they have retired to the tent or the slave-hut they are followed thither, and the throne is passed by, to reach them.

Scripture necessarily has this Divine, all-embracing spirit of humanity, as the great record of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Committed to the care of a chosen family, the progress of this kingdom is the history of that household as it swells to a tribe and to a nation. The story of the common people of the chosen race is thus the great theme of the Old Testament. Genesis, after a brief introductory glance at truths needful to lead the way up to it, devotes itself to this humble but glorious chronicle, and all the subsequent books continue it to its culmination in Jesus Christ.

Respect for manhood, as such—involved in the very conception of a Divine plan of Redemption—colours the whole story of the chosen people. From the first they have their simple patriarchal constitution, by which the community at large is represented in all its interests by elders chosen from its own members, and they retain these through all the oppression of Egypt, the wander-

ings of the desert, and the settled life of Canaan, till the destruction of the nation by the Romans. Despotism never extinguishes this vigorous national life. At times the elders are made the channels of communication between higher authorities and the people; then, again, the community itself is seen gathered in a vast assembly, to hear and decide on great questions directly, but in all cases, as will be seen in subsequent pages, popular liberty is respected, and the concurrence of the people as a whole required in all public action. Thus, while all the world besides was sunk in political slavery, the noblest ideas of liberty found a home in the pages of Scripture. In antiquity these fostered a magnificent spirit of national independence which made the Jew invincible; for though he might be overpowered, he never submitted. And in every age since, they have kindled the virtues of manhood in land after land; for the noblest inspirations of freedom have ever been found among the populations which have drunk in most of the spirit of the Bible. It has been the charter of human rights from the remotest ages, and it still silently protests against every social injustice and oppression. Even in Genesis the lesson is emphatically taught that all men are equal before God, and that true dignity consists not in mere outward rank or illustrious birth, but in the higher qualities of the intellect and of the heart.

The question of the authorship of Genesis and the other books of the Pentateuch¹ has been fiercely debated, and it has even been made a question of orthodoxy to believe that they were composed by Moses in the exact form in which we have them. But a little reflection will show that it in no way affects their sacred authority

¹ The word Pentateuch was introduced by the translators of the Bible into Greek. It means "the Five Books."

to whomsoever their authorship be ascribed; for that of many of the books of the canon is unknown. Nor is it wise to conclude that in the lapse of ages it was not part of the Divine plan that some of the inspired writers should be led to fill up the outline of any sacred book as the requirements of time may have demanded, or to arrange its parts as might be ultimately best. To invent a hard and fast theory on a subject so utterly beyond our comprehension as the composition of a Revelation is at once unwise and rash. It is enough for us that overwhelming evidence sustains our acceptance of all its parts as the inspired word of God, in the form in which we have received them.

Looking simply at Scripture itself, however, it seems impossible to escape the conclusion that Genesis and the other books of "the Law" were the work of Moses. He may, indeed, have been helped by the seventy elders, as the Rabbis assert in their traditions; for Ezra, himself an inspired man, speaks of their having been received by the great Lawgiver from God's "servants the prophets,"¹ but the fact that they are spoken of from Joshua to Daniel and even Ezra,² as the Book of the Law of Moses, appears to assume that he was recognized as their author, though this by no means excludes their revision by some of his inspired successors at a later date.³ In the same way, they are quoted in the New Testament as admittedly his work.⁴ The fact that they are spoken of in some passages of different sacred books

¹ Ezra ix. 11.

² Joshua viii. 31. 1 Kings ii. 2. 2 Kings xiv. 6. 2 Chron. xxiii. 18; xxv. 4; xxxiv. 14. Ezra iii. 2; vii. 6. Neh. viii. 1. Dan. xi. 11, 13.

³ See Vaihinger, art. Pentateuch, in Herzog's *Real Encyklopädie*.

⁴ e.g., Mark xii. 26. Luke ii. 22; xvi. 29; xxiv. 27, 44. John i. 17; vii. 23. Acts xiii. 39, etc., etc.

by various names, such as the Book of the Law of God, the Book of the Covenant, or simply the Law, is of no weight against this, for we ourselves often use more names than one for the same thing. Nor is the introduction of passages such as that respecting the death of Moses, at the close of Deuteronomy, or of modifications of the laws given in earlier books, or amplifications of the narrative, any reason for assigning the authorship to another than Moses, since it is willingly granted that an inspired successor must have written the notice of his death, and he himself could well have made such alterations in the earlier laws as we find, or have enlarged the details of the narratives by additional circumstances.¹

It is not, however, necessary to suppose that the whole book of Genesis is an original composition of the great lawgiver. On the contrary, he clearly availed himself of existing documents, as in the story of creation, of which a first account extends to the third verse of the second chapter, while a second occupies the verses that follow. In the one we are told of God as the Creator; in the other of His moral government of the world. Even the name by which He is made known is changed, for in the first the word Elohim is used—a name for the Divine Being simply as such; while in the second He is revealed as Jehovah Elohim—marking to whom the great name of Elohim is to be given.² There is no mention in the first

¹ Bertheau: *Die Sieben Gruppen Mos. Gesetze*, p. 19.—Renan (*Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, p. 117) quotes Philo's notice of Moses as a lawgiver, rather than a historian; but his doing so weighs nothing against the fact, which Renan admits, that the Mosaic authorship was an established opinion in Christ's day—that is, immediately after Philo. See also Renan's *Études*, p. 83.

² אֱלֹהִים (El) is part of various early names of mankind, as in

of the creation of woman, or of the institution of marriage, or of the moral law imposed on the newly created, and on the other hand the sabbath is introduced in the first and not in the second. Moses was evidently inspired to supplement the one account by the other, and thus make a fuller revelation, apparently from two primeval sources, than one by itself would have furnished. But it is only a question of literary interest, at best, to discuss the extent to which he may have been divinely led to employ materials already inviting his selection. Some portions he must have received by direct inspiration; others may have been derived from earlier documents or even traditions, purified from whatever was unworthy; others from personal knowledge. In any case, the book as it stands is to us the very word of God, speaking as only He could, through His servants, to mankind.

Mehujael (Gen. iv. 18), "The Smitten of God." It was also the Phenician name of the Highest God. It is held by Gesenius (*Thesaurus*, i. 49), to mean "MIGHT," as opposed to עֲנִי (Enosh) man as "THE WEAK ONE," (Ewald's *Gesch. des Volkes Isr.*, i. 3te Auf., p. 378). Perhaps, "THE TERROR AWAKENER" would be the full idea embodied in עֲלֹאֵךְ (Eloach), the sing. of Elohim. Related etymologies seem to include this as connected with the conception of MIGHT. Elohim, as a name for the One God, is peculiar to the Old Testament in its oldest portions, and is not found in this use in any other Semitic language. Various theories in explanation of the plural form being thus used have been advanced; but the simplest, and the true one, appears to be, that it is employed as an *intensive*, to express the majesty of Him to whom it is applied, as a plural word is used in Hebrew for the heavens, to express the idea of their immeasurable greatness.—Dietrich: *Abhandlungen zur Hebräischen Grammatik* (1846), p. 44, compared with p. 16 ff.





CHAPTER II.

ANCIENT IDEAS, SACRED AND PROFANE, OF GOD AND NATURE—A CONTRAST.

“THE first leaf of the Mosaic record,” says Jean Paul, “has more weight than all the folios of men of science and philosophers.” And he is right, for we owe to it the earliest and the grandest revelation of that first principle of all religion—the existence, the unity, the personality, and the moral government of God.

It is in keeping with the whole colour of Jewish thought that the very opening of its literature should be thus especially occupied with such truths, for the whole history of the nation is simply that of its religion. Other races have chosen as their part a political career, or pre-eminence in art, or in philosophical speculation, or in social development; but from first to last the intellect of the Hebrew dwelt supremely on the matters of his faith. He never aspired to take a place among the great empires of antiquity, and has left no record of political revolutions effected by his conquests. The triumphs of the pencil or the chisel he left with a contemptuous indifference, to Egypt, or Assyria, or Greece. The few great efforts of architecture in his country were the work of foreigners hired to erect them. The civilization of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt or Phenicia never took root in Palestine, and was, indeed, abhorred by the strict Jew

as connected with alien races whom he despised as heathen. The seaports of his country were left to other races, and commerce on a great scale was utterly neglected, except for the short time when Solomon himself turned merchant, and sent ships, built and manned by Phenicians, on trading voyages.

Nor had the Jew any such interest in religious philosophy as has marked other peoples. The Aryan races, both east and west, might throw themselves with ardour into the high questions of metaphysics and theology; he contented himself with the utterances of revelation. It never occurred to him as it did to the Hindoo or the Greek, to work out by his own reason the mysterious problems of nature—physical, human, or divine. What they strove to think out for themselves, he accepted as first truths, communicated to his fathers by the Almighty, which it was alike idle and impious to discuss. Many, no doubt, in every generation, indifferently illustrated the national instinct; but from the days of Abraham to the destruction of Israel as a local community, there were always leading spirits, who, by their intense fidelity to the hereditary spirit of their race, vindicated its character as in a special sense the people of God. The world may have inherited no advances in political science from the Hebrew, no great epic, no school of architecture, no high lessons in philosophy, no wide extension of human thought or knowledge in any secular direction; but he has given it its religion. To other races we owe the splendid inheritance of modern civilization and secular culture, but the religious education of mankind has been the gift of the Jew alone.

The account of creation with which Genesis opens illustrates this striking fact. Its aim throughout is to lead from nature up to God, and in this it strikes the

keynote of all that remains of Hebrew literature, which is now comprised in the narrow limits of the Bible.

It is impossible for us, with our hereditary knowledge of the Scriptures, to realize the greatness of the addition made to the religious knowledge of mankind by even the first chapter of Scripture. Primeval revelations of God had everywhere become corrupted in the days of Moses. The all-embracing heaven had itself become divine to the Aryan nations, in their native seat in Western Central Asia; and natural appearances—the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the dawn—had gradually been deified as its children. Transferring to their religion the material conceptions of daily life, there was already a Bride of Heaven, sometimes taking form as the Shadowy Night that divides with Him the rule of the world, and sometimes appearing as Mother Earth.¹ In India and the East, this gradually developed into an identification of the Divine Being with nature. All we see or are—the visible universe—the affections, virtues, or vices; all the spiritual world of gods and genii came to be viewed as only manifestations of Brahma under multitudinous forms.² In Western Asia the primitive creed sank into an idolatry which regarded the countless powers or forces of the universe as separately divine. Egypt, indeed, had still a secret and mysterious doctrine of One supreme God, but it was strangely confused by polytheistic conceptions. He was, moreover, a mere abstraction, related to man or the world only as the creator of the gods, who were emanations from Himself.³ To the initiated these might be but names of different manifestations of the One

¹ Professor Wilkins, *The Aryan Races*, passim.

² Dillmann's *Genesis*, p. 7.

³ *Book of the Dead*, quoted in Maspero's *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 28.

Supreme; but to the multitude they formed an endless crowd of divinities. Among them, the sun, under various titles was the object of the highest veneration; but by a singular perversion of the religious sense, many of the lower animals were also worshipped as incarnations of the gods. In ancient times these heavenly beings had dwelt among men in the persons of the god-kings, but they had ceased to do so when man had been provided with laws and rules by which to guide himself. From that time, they had veiled themselves in the bodies of animals, to watch the course of the world without taking part in it. The cat, the crocodile, the serpent, were sacred forms into which they transfused, as it were, part of their divinity. The jackal, the ibis, the ape, and the scarabæus beetle were adored over all the country. The sparrow hawk, the hippopotamus, and even the serpent were locally divine. The sacred oxen of Heliopolis and Memphis were especially famous. Grovelling homage was paid to these strange divinities. They were fed in costly temples; had numerous and splendid priest-hoods; had festivals and high days, were mourned by whole districts, and in some cases by all Egypt, at their death, and were then embalmed and had public funerals. To show disrespect to one was a serious crime; to injure or kill one was punishable with death.¹ No wonder that Juvenal, more than fifteen hundred years after Moses, ridicules a superstition so gross and repulsive.

“Who knows not,” he asks, “what kind of omens the mad Egyptian worships. One district adores a crocodile, another grows pale before an ibis glutted with snakes. The golden image of the sacred ape shines afar. . . .

¹ See the story of Phanes, in Ebers' *Eine Ägyptische Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 28 ff. The Greek narrowly escaped death; his slave was stoned to death for killing a cat.

Here, whole towns worship cats;¹ there, fishes of the Nile; yonder, a dog. . . . It is a crime to pull or eat a leek or an onion. O, holy nation, whose gods thus grow in gardens!"²

Thus, if in some sense it was still true that all men admitted that there were gods,³ it was no less so that their conceptions were either mere shadowy dreams, or were alike degrading to man and to the objects of his worship.

It is hard to carry ourselves back to the infancy of the world and think aright of the childhood of the human mind. Men felt from their own experience that motion and power were the signs and the results of life, and took for granted that all force, of whatever kind, must imply it. Hence the sun, the moon, and the stars, which they saw moving over the heavens, and whose appearances or absence were connected with the natural phenomena of the world, were fancied to be the intelligent and living causes of the return of spring, the heat and splendour of summer, the bounty of autumn, and the sterility of winter; of the alternation of day and night; the fall of the rains and dews, the rise of rivers; and of the recurrence of storms or of sunny skies. But in his childish awe and ignorance, man could not limit his reverence to these distant and splendid objects. The mysterious force which swelled the bud or ripened the fruit; which poured out the running stream or heaved up the waves of the ocean; the cloud above, and the wind that bore it along; the lofty mountains and the gloomy valley were all alike more or less divine.⁴ The simple fancies of savage

¹ Emendation of Brotier.

² Juvenal, *Sat.*, xv. 1-11.

³ Cic., *Tusc. Quæst.*, i. 13.

⁴ "Have you read in one of our most recent travellers, the story of the American Indian who set out to see the great cataract of

tribes at the present day were then, in fact, the sober belief of all races. Whatever was beyond their simple comprehension was ascribed to an indwelling spirit. Even a great king like Xerxes, in the fifth century before Christ, could not think of the seas or rivers he had to cross as other than living beings, whose favour he had to propitiate, or whose anger he, in his pride, would indignantly chastise. The Hellespont, daring to break down his bridge of boats, must be scourged like a rebellious slave, to cow it into subjection for the future.¹

No wonder, then, that antiquity had the most confused ideas of creation. With some, matter was eternal and all that is had resulted from the chance coming together of atoms: with others, as we have seen, the universe was only a manifestation of the Universal Spirit, God being Matter, and matter God, or rather the world being itself divine: with still others He was a dreamy abstraction, exercising no influence on man or nature, and alike beyond our conceptions and unfit for our intelligent reverence. Outside the Bible the knowledge of God had perished from among men.

To all the vague and dreamy fancies respecting the Divine Being and the world prevalent in his day, the simple narrative of Moses opposes a simple but sublime revelation, which bears on its forehead the seal of the Living God. In language the simplicity of which befits the remote antiquity in which it was uttered, it declares Niagara? Already, when far off, the sublime sound made him fancy he heard the voice of the great Spirit. When he came nearer he fell down and prayed—not from slavish terror or dull stupidity, but from a feeling that the great Spirit must be near in a scene so wonderful and grand, and should be honoured in simple reverential prayer,—the best offering he had to make.”—Herder’s *Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, vol. i. p. 47

¹ See Grote’s *Greece*, on the incident.

the absolute and eternal distinction between the création and the Creator, and between the creature and Him who formed it. The heavens and the earth are not God, for He made them; neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars are God, nor are the seas or the countless wonders, animate or inanimate, they contain, for He has spoken them all, alike, into being.¹ The origin of the universe had been ascribed to Chance or Fate, but Moses in the place of such unmeaning expressions of atheism reveals a Living, Personal, and Only God. Matter had been supposed to be eternal, but he discloses its creation in the first words of his narrative: "In the beginning God *created*² the heavens and the

¹ See Robertson's *Notes on Genesis*, p. 3.

² "Bara." Of this word Gesenius, in his *Thesaurus*, p. 357 b, says:—"The use of this verb in Kal (the conjugation here employed) is entirely different from its primary signification (to cut, to shape, to fashion), and is used rather of the new production of a thing than of the shaping or elaboration of existing material. That the first verse of Genesis teaches that the original creation of the world in its rude and chaotic state was from nothing, while in the remaining part of the chapter the elaboration and distribution of the matter thus created is taught, the connection of the whole section shows sufficiently clearly." Aben Ezra, quoted by Gesenius, gives the same opinion in his commentary on chap. i. ver. 1. Mühlau and Volck, in the new (8th) edition of *Gesenius' Handwörterbuch*, say: "Bara is used only of Divine creation, and never with an accusative of the material." Dillmann (*Genesis* * p. 18), says: "The Hebrews use only the conjugation Piel (intensative) in speaking of human 'forming' or 'shaping,' while, on the other hand, they use only Kal in speaking of creation by God." "There is thus," says Ewald, "a designed and sharply marked distinction of the laborious and artificial 'forming' by man, and the easy, spontaneous creation of anything by God. An accusative of the material is never found with it (Kal) as with other words of forming or making." Dillmann indeed will

* *Kurzgefasstes Exeg. Handbuch zum alten Testament.*

earth ;” not formed or fashioned them from previously existing materials. We have not, therefore, to do with a mere incomprehensible abstraction which clouds our comprehension, but with a Living Being, infinite in His

hardly grant that “bara” necessarily involves “creation from nothing,” but the only ground he brings forward for this hesitation is what seems to me the incorrect opinion that in verse 27 the production of mankind by natural generation “is traced back to a ‘bēro’ of God.” I cannot see that it is in any way referred to. Nor is there more weight in the fact that “bara” is at times used in the parallels of Hebrew verse along with the more common words of an allied sense. It may be used thus, but they are never used in the special applications in which it is exclusively employed.

Delitzsch says (*Commentar über die Genesis*, p. 91):—“The word Bara, in its etymology, does not exclude a previous material. It has, as the use of Piel shows, the fundamental idea of cutting or hewing. But as in other languages words which define creation by God have the same etymological idea at their root, so Bara has acquired the idiomatic meaning of a divine creating, which, whether in the kingdom of nature, or of history, or of the spirit, calls into being that which hitherto had no existence. Bara never appears as the word for human creations, differing in this from the synonyms ‘asak,’ ‘yatzar,’ ‘yalad,’ which are used both of men and of God—it is never used with an accusative of the material, and even from this it follows that it defines the divine creative act as one without any limitations, and its result, as to its proper material, as entirely new; and as to its first cause, entirely the creation of divine power.” See also Umbreit, in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1866, p. 706. Kalisch, *Genesis*, vol. i. p. 1, says: “God called the universe into being out of nothing: not out of formless matter coeval in existence with Himself.” Pagninus (*Thesaurus*) has the same definition; “Bara,” he says, “is a word appropriate only to God, as the Creator out of nothing.”

Staib, in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1852, p. 825, uses it as equivalent to calling into being what was not before. The words “host of them,” chap. ii. 1, includes all the inhabitants of the earth, the creatures and even the plants. Gesenius, *Thes.*, p. 1146.

power, indeed, but bodied forth by the attributes of Personality, so that we can intelligently worship Him.

Yet Personality merely in the sense of self-consciousness and will, would not constitute a Being fitted to attract us, if unaccompanied with the attributes of a distinctively moral nature. Mere power might awe and crush us, but it could not command our love, or the consent of our moral nature to its requirements. But the conception of God revealed by Moses adds, forthwith, all the special characteristics which attract the reverence and constrain the heart. It is not enough for a true personality that there be self-consciousness, for one might conceive, as the poets do, of the clouds or the mountains as self-conscious. Nor is the addition of will alone, enough, for even the lower creatures have both self-consciousness, and a power of choice and purpose. A moral character is wanted to complete a personality of the highest type, and this also we find in the Mosaic revelation of God. The creation of the heavens and the earth, and each utterance of an Almighty fiat, imply self-consciousness and will; but there is, also, throughout the whole narrative, the still grander disclosure of a moral character, in the Divine approval of all things made, as "good;" in the beneficence which provides for the wants and happiness of all living things, and, above all, in the requirements from mankind of obedience to a sovereign standard of right, in the will of a Holy and Benevolent Creator. x

The God of Moses thus stands in the strongest contrast with all conceptions of the Divine Being attained by unaided reason. He is not only all-powerful and all-wise, but He is the God of love. While the Creator of all, He is, Himself, the Uncreated, and as such Unchangeable. He is subject to no control of blind Fate or

Necessity, but absolutely sovereign : confined to no limits of space, but present through all His works as a watchful Providence. Thus, in the very opening of Scripture the conception given us of God commands our worship as the highest Ideal. No one loftier or purer can ever challenge our homage, for it is instinctively felt that it is in all things perfect. There is no attempt, as in the religious books or legends of other races, to tell the origin of the Godhead. His existence is assumed as a first truth. The Egyptian theology, amidst which Moses had grown up, dwelt on the birth of the gods from Osiris, and told how he, the sun, brought forth the seven great planetary gods, and then the twelve humbler gods of the signs of the zodiac ; they, in their turn, producing the twenty-eight gods presiding over the stations of the moon, the seventy-two divine companions of the sun, and other deities. Indian theology spoke of the universe bringing forth first water, then placing in it a germ which, after a time, became a great egg, shining with golden splendour, in which there came into existence Brahma, the father of all creatures. The Greeks constructed genealogies of the gods, transferring to the heavens the whole circle of human experiences and passions. The races of Western Asia laboriously stamped on their clay tablets and cylinders the legends of their greater and lesser gods. But no such unworthy characteristics deface the grand sublimity of Scripture. From the midst of a universal corruption of religion, its solitary but heavenly voice is heard, in the stillness of the very morning of time, proclaiming a God who had existed from all eternity—"before the mountains were brought forth, and before the earth and the world were formed"—a God creating all things by the word of His power, and at the same time One to whom man could

lift his eyes and direct his prayers; in the contemplation of whom he might animate his hopes and forget his sorrows; in the holy perfections of whom he could feel that he enjoyed the sympathy and love of an All-gracious as well as Almighty Father.

Thus the Hebrew race are presented in their earliest records in the light in which they continued to be distinctly noted through all their history, as the one people of God, alone of all the nations of the earth, faithful to Him as a whole, through all their vicissitudes. As Moses opens the sacred writings by proclaiming Him, so the Jew, in all subsequent generations, has continued to witness for Him, till, from the household of Abraham, faith in the One Only Living and True God has spread, through Judaism, Christianity, and Mahometanism well nigh over the earth.

The explanation of such a unique fact has been variously sought. With some it has been ascribed to a fancied devotion of the Semitic nations to the monotheistic idea.¹ But Max Müller, a scholar biased by no theological leanings, has shown the baselessness of this theory. "Can it be said," he asks, "that a monotheistic instinct could have been implanted in all those nations which adored Elohim, Jehovah Sabaoth, Moloch, Nisroch, Rimmon, Necho, Dagon, Ashtaroth, Baal or Bel, Baal-peor, Beelzebub, Chemosh, Milcom, Adrammelech, Annamelech, Nibbaz and Tartak, Ashima, Nergal, Succoth-benoth, the sun, the moon, the planets, and all the host of heaven?"² Yet all these divinities were worshipped by Semitic peoples.

"Nor is it possible to explain on merely historical grounds how the Hebrews first obtained and so persist-

¹ Renan: *Histoire Générale des Langues Sémitiques*, p. 5.

² Max Müller: *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i p. 345.

ently clung to this grand first truth. Their chronicles show continual lapses into idolatry, and yet they always recovered themselves; till, at last, after a bitter discipline of national calamities, they finally turned with enthusiastic devotion to the worship of Jehovah.

“Reference to a primitive religious instinct in mankind is as little satisfactory; for though there must have been such an intuitive sentiment in the earliest men as the basis of their future idolatries, it could only have impressed on them the existence of some Divine Being, but in no degree involved the conception of that Being as one and one only, but, as all history proves, tended to the very opposite. Nor can it be said that the Hebrew worked out the great truth by a profound philosophy, for no contrast could be greater between the Jewish mind and that of other nations of antiquity sprung from a different stock, than the utter absence from it of the metaphysical speculations in which other races delighted.

“Yet, while all nations over the earth have developed a religious tendency which acknowledged a higher than human power in the universe, Israel is the only one which has risen to the grandeur of conceiving this power as the One, Only, Living God.” No wonder that he concludes, “If we are asked how it was that Abraham possessed not only the primitive conception of the divinity, as He had revealed Himself to all mankind, but passed, through the denial of all other gods, to the knowledge of the One God, we are content to answer that it was by a special *divine revelation*.”¹

God, like the sun, can be seen only by His own light. The first chapter of Genesis, in itself, stamps the canon which it opens with the seal of inspiration.

¹ Max Müller, *Chips, etc.*, vol. i. p. 372.



CHAPTER III.

ANCIENT LEGENDS OF CREATION.

THE question has often been raised, whence Moses obtained the materials from which his account of creation was composed. Were they direct communications from God, or does he describe, as some have fancied, a series of visions mysteriously granted him, or were there any pre-existing documents or traditions, of which he made use, separating, in doing so, the true and pure, by divine inspiration, from the errors and debasements which had added themselves to them?

The two earlier theories of direct Divine communication, and of the presentation of a series of visions before the mind of Moses, of which the lamented Hugh Miller in his "Testimony of the Rocks" was perhaps the most recent advocate, have within the last few years been finally made untenable by the discoveries in ancient Chaldean literature, as deciphered from the tablets and cylinders brought from the long buried palaces and public buildings of Assyria.

From these it is found that the races of Western Asia, which embraced shoots of the Aryan, Turanian, and Semitic stocks,¹ had traditions of the creation and of the great early events in the history of the world, which

¹ "The Aryan Race" is the name given to the stock from

had come down to them from long prehistoric ages. Whence they were derived at first it is impossible to conjecture, though the fact that the tradition of the origin of the world accords so closely with the narrative sanctioned by Divine inspiration seems to show that it must have been an echo from primitive revelation, perhaps in the garden of Eden. The glow of these earliest days lingered in the sky long after their sun had set. That such distant memories should have reached Moses is easily understood when we recollect that Abraham, the father of the Hebrew race, came from their very home in Mesopotamia, and that his grandson Jacob returned thither, and after spending many years in the region of the Euphrates, wandered back to Canaan and thence to Egypt, the land of Moses and the Israelites.

The plains of Lower Mesopotamia had long been the seat of an ancient people when the forefathers of Abraham wandered towards them from the south, that is, from Arabia. Known to us as Accadians, and doubtless connected with the Accad mentioned in Genesis,¹ they had a literature and high civilization peculiar to themselves. Assyrian tablets and cylinders have thrown a strangely full light over this early nation. Their language may be compared to those of the Turanian or Turco-Tatar stem, and seems to indicate that

which the Hindus were an eastern offshoot, and the Celtic, Italian, Greek and German peoples a western branch.

The Turanian languages are so called from "Turan," the Persian name for the countries north of Persia. They embrace the northern division, which includes Mongol, Turkish, Hungarian and other Asiatic languages, and the southern, which is illustrated by the Tamul of India, the Malay, and the Polynesian.

The Semitic languages include the Chaldee and Syriac, the Arabic and Ethiopic, the Hebrew, Phenician, and other dialects of ancient Palestine.

¹ Gen. x. 10.

the races themselves had some connection. Columns of Accadian, or early Chaldaic, as it is sometimes called, are found accompanied, side by side, by Assyrian words to explain them, as already obsolete; but inscriptions and documents in Accadian alone have also come down to us.

To this long vanished people was due the invention of the strange arrow-headed writing of Babylonia, which was at first a system of pictures or hieroglyphics, but gradually developed itself into syllables, though without entirely losing its primitive characteristics. At the time of Abraham, Ur of the Chaldees; Larsam, the modern Senkereh; Arku, the modern Warka, and the Erech of the Bible; and Babilu, the Scripture Babel, or Babylon, had already, for an unknown period, been centres of government, religious worship, and general culture. One ancient king of Babylon is named in the inscriptions of Asurbanipal as having reigned 1635 years before that monarch's conquest of Shushan,¹ that is, about 2280 years before Christ, and another, Kudur-mabuk is recorded as Lord of Elam, and as claiming dominion over the whole land from Syria to that country, which lay on the east of the Tigris; so that even by modern estimate he was a great monarch. The exact date of these early rulers cannot, however, as yet, be definitely fixed from contemporary records; the earliest whose exact period has reached us, excepting from the allusion in the inscriptions of Asurbanipal, being contemporary with Moses, that is, about B.C. 1475.²

¹ Smith's *Early History of Babylon. Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 8. Schrader (art. *Babylonien*, in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*), says:—1635 before Sennacherib, which would raise the date to about B.C. 2400.

² Smith's *Early History of Babylon. Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 5. Schrader says, B.C. 1500.

So strangely remote, however, was the rise of this civilization, that all the great temple-structures of Babylonia were founded by kings who must have reigned earlier than the sixteenth century before Christ. Bricks and clay tablets, with their names, and short inscriptions respecting them, have been found in the ruins of their constructions, the vast size of which shows the great power they wielded. Nor was their empire famous only for architecture. The Accadians had already distinguished themselves by careful astronomical observations and calculations; had a carefully graded system of weights and measures; a money system skilfully settled, and a literature of which copious remains are now found in European museums, embracing works on geography, astrology, mythology, grammar, and mathematics; an epic called the Descent of Istar to Hades; psalms or hymns to the gods, curious legends of gods and heroes, and much besides.

Nor were the civil or social affairs of these ancient communities in less full development. Tablets recording laws, royal commands, and government despatches are intermixed with bills of merchants, deeds of sale or loan, and banker's transactions and receipts, while thousands of beautifully engraved seals, dating as remotely, still exist, to attest the progress made in one at least of the arts in these early ages.

On this busy scene of the very dawn of time a new people after a while appeared, wandering from Arabia to the south of Babylonia, and settling first in and round Ur, the present Mugheir, in the delta of the Euphrates. This was the race from a branch of which Abraham was, hereafter, to spring, for they were of Semitic stock. Steadily fighting their way north, they slowly mastered the Accadians and became their rulers; but the con-

querors, like the Romans by the Greeks in after ages, were ere long in turn subdued, in a higher sense, by the culture which they found existing in the regions they had won. Already in the twentieth century before Christ, Sargon I., a Semitic king,¹ after taking Erech, the present Warka, had the old holy books of the Accadians copied and also translated into Semitic—those books, later transcripts of which compose the literary treasures of Assyria which we now prize so highly.²

Traces of primitive revelation seem still to have lingered in the populations to which the Semitic element was thus now added. The name of Babylon, or rather Babel itself, means the Gate of El, and El,³ as we know, is the early Hebrew name for God. In the days of Abraham a knowledge of Him still survived even as far off as Palestine, for we find Melchisedek addressed by the patriarch, and spoken of in the inspired narrative, as a priest of “the most High God, the Maker⁴ of heaven and earth;” and the king of the Canaanitish town Gerar is also described as familiar with His name.⁵ Yet, far and near, this last reminiscence of Paradise was more or less corrupted by idolatrous additions. The Accadians had received from the past, accounts of Creation, of the

¹ Semitic is the name given to the races speaking a language allied to the Hebrew and Arabic.

² Schrader, art. *Babylonien*, in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*. Maspero's *Histoire Ancienne*, pp. 149, 152-166.

Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. pp. 63-69. Rawlinson gives B.C. 2548 as the approximate date of the Semitic invasion of Accadia. Maspero and others give B.C. 2000, as the date of Sargon I.

³ So in the Assyrian inscriptions, but the sense of “confusion” (Gen. xi. 7) is also justified by the Syriac and Arabic.

⁴ “Possessor” in the authorized version should be translated “Maker.” Gen. xiv. 18-20.

⁵ Gen. xx. 4.

Deluge, and of other great events, but in all cases they had disfigured them by heathen corruptions. Such as they were, Abraham must have been familiar with them, and through him and his descendants they would reach the days of Moses and become known also to him.

In these primeval traditions as they have come down to us in the old Chaldean form, we find coincidences with the sacred narratives, and also variations from them, which indicate that while we have in no degree discovered the direct sources from which Moses derived his accounts of creation and the early history of the world, we are pointed to still earlier sources common to both. What these were, admits, however, of only one answer. What else could they have been than the accounts given by the common father of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, before the dispersion of mankind, accounts handed thus from beyond the Flood as an heirloom of the antediluvian world? They may have been oral, or they may have been written, for the perfection to which the art of writing had arrived so soon after Nimrod, may well lead us to believe it was an art transmitted from across the waters of the Deluge.¹

The old Accadian account of the Creation, so strangely recovered, is intensely interesting, at once for comparison and contrast with that of Genesis. Only two tablets, out of at least five, have as yet been found, and both of these are mutilated. The first reads thus,²—

When the upper region was not yet called Heaven,
And the lower region was not yet called Earth,
And the abyss of Hades had not yet opened its arms;
Then the chaos of waters gave birth to all of them

¹ See *Genesis and the Brickfields*, by Canon Tristram. Also an article by Riehm, in *Studien und Kritiken* (1866), p. 568.

² Translation by H. F. Talbot, Esq. *Transactions of Soc. of Bib. Archæology*, vol. v. p. 426.

And the waters were gathered into one place.
 No men yet dwelt together ; no animals wandered about :
 None of the gods had yet been born.
 Their names were not spoken : their attributes were not known ;
 Then the eldest of the gods,
 Lakhmu and Lakhamu, were born
 And grew up . . .
 Assur and Kissur were born next
 And lived through long periods.
 Anu . . .

The rest of the tablet is lost.¹

Another translation made by the late Mr. George Smith² is somewhat different. It runs thus—

When above was not raised the heavens ;
 And below on the earth a plant had not grown up ;
 The abysses also had not broken open their boundaries :
 The Chaos (or water) Tiamat was the producing mother of the
 whole of them.
 Those waters at the beginning were ordained, but
 A tree had not grown, a flower had not unfolded.
 When the gods had not sprung up, any one of them ;
 A plant had not grown, and order did not exist,
 Were made also the great gods ;
 The gods Lahmu and Lahamu they caused to come
 And they grew . . .
 The gods Sar and Kissar were made . . .
 A course of days, and a long time passed . . .
 The god Anu . . .
 The gods Sar and . . .

The fifth tablet reads thus, in the translation of Mr. Fox Talbot—

He constructed dwellings for the great gods.
 He fixed up constellations, whose figures were like animals.

¹ *Trans. of Soc. of Bib. Archæology*, vol. v. p. 426.

² *Chaldean Genesis*, p. 62. The Assyrians, like the Hebrews, believed that the heavens were first created; then the earth. The words for chaos in Genesis is Tohu va Bohu. In Assyrian the god of chaos is Bahu.

He made the year. Into four quarters he divided it.
Twelve months he established, with their constellations, three by three.

And for the days of the year he appointed festivals.
He made dwellings for the planets : for their rising and setting.
And that nothing should go amiss, and that the course of none should be retarded,

He placed with them the dwellings of Bel and Hea.

He opened great gates on every side :

He made strong the portals, on the left hand and on the right.

In the centre he placed luminaries ;

The moon he appointed to rule the night

And to wander through the night, until the dawn of day.

Every month without fail he made holy assembly days.

In the beginning of the month, at the rising of the night,

It shot forth its horns to illuminate the heavens.

On the seventh day he appointed a holy day,

And to cease from all business he commanded.

Then arose the Sun on the horizon of heaven in (glory).

Seven more lines are on the tablet, but unfortunately they are so broken as to be untranslatable. The light shining through ages in the others thus suddenly goes out.

In George Smith's translation ¹ the same lines run as follows—

It was delightful, all that was fixed by the great gods.

Stars, their appearance in figures of animals he arranged.

To fix the years through the observations of their constellations,

Twelve months (or signs) of stars in three rows he arranged,

From the day when the year commences unto the close.

He marked the positions of the wandering stars (planets), to shine in their courses.

That they may not do injury, and may not trouble any one,

The positions of the gods Bel and Hea he fixed with him.

And he opened the great gates in the darkness shrouded ;

The fastenings were strong on the left and right.

In its mass (*i.e.*, the lower chaos) he made a boiling,

¹ Smith's *Chaldean Genesis*, p. 69.

The god Uru (the moon) he caused to rise out, the night he overshadowed,

To fix it also for the light of the night, until the shining of the day,

That the month might not be broken, and in its amount be regular.

At the beginning of the month, at the rising of the night

His horns are breaking through to shine on the heaven.

On the seventh day to a circle he begins to swell

And stretches towards the dawn further.

When the god Shamas (the sun) in the horizon of heaven, in the east,

. . . formed beautifully,

. . . to the orbit Shamas was perfected

. . . the dawn Shamas should change

. . . going on its path.

The idea of the Bible account of Creation having been taken from such sources as these needs no refutation, for the contrast between them and it is at once apparent. Points of resemblance, however, show that both had a common origin, though the Chaldean story had sunk, even in these early ages, almost to the level of ordinary heathen legends. The first fragment corresponds in its subject to the first two verses of the first chapter of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In both accounts the present order of things rose from a watery chaos,—the *Tehōm* of the Scriptures, the *Tihamti*¹ of the legend,—the same word being thus used in both narratives for the primeval condition of the world. But here the resemblance ends. In the legend the world is supposed to be created from pre-existent matter, not as in Scripture out of nothing. While the first words of Genesis proclaim the One Living God as the Creator of

¹ Or, *Tiamat*.

all things and Himself uncreated, the legend has no higher conception than that "none of the gods had yet been born," and that the "great gods,"—Lahmu and Lahamu, male and female,—“were born and grew up,” to be followed after a time by numerous lesser deities, their offspring. It has no higher thought of the Divine nature than to transfer to it the difference of sexes, and people heaven with male and female gods. Tantu, the sea, and Absu, the abyss, beget Mummu, that is, chaos. This again brings forth Lahmu and Lahamu, the male and female principles of force or growth: from Lahmu springs Kissar, the lower expanse; from Lahamu, Assur or Sar, the upper expanse; and from these again come Anu, the heaven, Anatu, the earth, Elu or Bel, and Beltis, while the earth and the heaven produce the planets, from whom again spring the lower gods.¹

Thus the whole is only the deification of the different parts of nature in an ever increasing number.

The second fragment is a parallel to the fourth day of creation: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

As the first tablet thus corresponded to the first and

¹ Smith's *Chaldean Genesis*, p. 60.

second verses of Genesis, and the fifth to the fourth day, fragments left of what seems to have been the seventh speak of the acts of the sixth day. Hence the legend appears to have resembled the Scripture narrative in the division of creation into the work of successive days, while in Mr. Talbot's translation the seventh, in the legend as in Scripture, is "appointed a holy day" on which all labour was commanded to cease. In Mr. Smith's translation, again, the successive stages of creation would seem, in the legend, as in Scripture, to have been pronounced good. In the former, however, instead of the simple statement that the heavenly bodies were set "as lights in the firmament," we are told that the stars were arranged in constellations, with the figure of animals; a reference to the astronomical fancies of the signs of the zodiac; but both agree that they were designed for marks of the seasons and measures of time. In the belief that the planets were living beings, the Chaldean account ascribes palaces to them, but as they might wander from their courses, the gods Bel and Hea were set to watch over them and keep them from such a misfortune. The ninth line of the tablet, with true primitive simplicity, speaks of great gates fixed on the left hand and the right, through which, perhaps, the luminaries are to pass at rising and setting. In the eleventh line the difficulties of translation are well shown, for while Mr. Smith translates it, "In its mass (the lower chaos) he made a boiling," Mr. Talbot renders it, "In the centre he placed luminaries," and this being the later version is probably the more correct. The creation of the moon precedes that of the sun, and the former, of which alone the tablet gives a complete account, is described as intended to rule the night and to fix the holy assembly days of each month.

The only other fragments of the legend as yet found is part of the seventh tablet, and is translated as follows by Mr. Smith:—

When the gods in their assembly had created . . .
 Were delightful (good) the strong monsters . . .
 Cattle of the field, beasts of the field, and creeping things of the field . . .
 They fixed for the living creatures . . .
 . . . cattle and creeping things of the city they fixed to . . .
 . . . the assembly of the creeping things, the whole which were created
 . . . which in the assembly of my family (that of the god Assur, the heaven) . . .
 . . . and the god Nin-si-ku (the lord of the noble face) caused to be two . . .
 . . . the assembly of the creeping things he caused to go . . .¹

This fragment corresponds to the sixth day of creation: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle of their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good." Possibly the allusion in the eighth line to "the two" is to the first man and woman but if so there is nothing more recovered respecting them.

Such is a complete copy of the fragments of this early literature which so strangely illustrates the Scripture version of creation. The resemblances and the variations speak for themselves, leaving the immeasurable superiority of the narrative of Moses beyond comparison. The Chaldean account has, at most, only here and there some traces of the grand simplicity which characterises

¹ Smith's *Chaldean Genesis*, p. 77.

that of Scripture throughout. At the best, it glows only with a darkened light :—

“ . . . As when the sun new risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams,”—

while the Bible story is like the light of a morning without clouds. In each, the brightness must needs have come from the same holy source ; but in the one it shines clear ; in the other, it struggles through mists and clouds.

One important bearing of these old legends must not, however, be overlooked. It has been latterly accepted as a recognised peculiarity of the early chapters of Genesis, that they consist of separate and independent documents, marked by the use of the name Elohim for God in the one and Jehovah in the other. The first chapter and the first three verses of chapter ii. are attributed to the “Elohists” ; the rest of chapter ii. and also chapter iii. are ascribed to the “Jehovist,” and are held to be a second account of creation. But the Assyrian tablets contain not only the “Elohists’ ” account of the six days, but also that of the fall of man, by the “Jehovist.” The story of Genesis thus existed, before Moses, in its completeness, both as a whole and in detail, and even in the order of its incidents ; the two parts which critics propose to regard as independent and separate, forming a single connected and consecutive narrative. It would indeed argue nothing against the Mosaic authorship of the sacred book if he had used different sources, under Divine guidance, but it seems at least worthy of notice that the mere change of the Divine name does not seem to prove that he did so.





CHAPTER IV.

THE BIBLE AND MODERN SCIENCE.

A LIST of the treatises published even within the last fifty years on the relation of the Bible to Modern Science would be a long one. Klee, de Luc, de Serres, de Rougemont, Hugh Miller, Challis, Dawson, Warington, Rorison, McCausland, McCaul, Fairholme, Pfaff, Böhner, Lange, Ebrard, Delitzsch, Keerl, Pianciani, Reusch, Schrader, Riehm and Godet are only a few of the able writers attracted to this subject, each with a fresh theory more or less differing from those of all before him.

The zeal to defend the Word of God from all hostile attacks is a noble one, but the history of the past is a continuous lesson of the supreme importance that it be a zeal according to knowledge. Every great discovery in science has, in turn, been viewed with suspicion by worthy but mistaken theologians, and every error in physical science, now exploded, has been vindicated by what was held at the time to be the voice of Scripture. Augustine denounced the idea of there being "antipodes, or men on the opposite side of the earth, with their feet opposite our feet," as "on no account to be believed," since it would contradict Scripture.¹ The roundness of

¹ Aug., *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xvi. c. ix.

the earth was thought to be satisfactorily disproved by the text which speaks of the heaven being stretched out like a curtain.¹ Galileo was forced to sign a statement that "the proposition that the sun is the centre of the universe and immoveable from its place, is absurd, philosophically false, and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to Scripture," and that "the proposition that the earth is not the centre of the universe, nor immoveable, but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is absurd, philosophically false, and at least erroneous in faith."² Did not the Bible say that the world was established that it *cannot be moved*?³ Even so acute a mind as that of Calvin urged that this text proved conclusively that the earth is at rest in the heavens, and that the sun moves round it.⁴ Nor were other passages apparently less decided. Was it not written, "God laid the foundations of the earth, that it *should not be removed for ever*." "*The earth abideth for ever*." Was it not clearly taught that the sun moved, not the earth, by such language as, "In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom *coming out of his chamber*, and rejoiceth as a strong man to *run a race*. His *going forth* is from the end of the heaven, and his *circuit* unto the end thereof." "The sun also *ariseth*, and the sun *goeth down*, and *hasteth* to the place whence he *arose*."⁵ Columbus was assailed with quotations from the book of Genesis, the Psalms of David, the Prophets, the Epistles, and the Gospels, to prove the impiety of his belief in the existence of America.⁶

The mistake in such cases was that men went with

¹ Ps. civ. 2. ² Quoted in *Essays and Reviews*, p. 208.

³ Ps. xciii. 1. ⁴ Calvin, *On the Psalms*, on Ps. xciii. 1.

⁵ Ps. civ. 5. Eccles. i. 4. Ps. xix. 4-6. Eccles. i. 5.

⁶ Irving's *Columbus*, vol. i. p. 46.

their preconceived ideas to the Bible, and interpreted it so as to support them. Instead of taking the only safe course in reference to the phenomena of nature, of drawing their conclusions from the patient and wide observation of facts, they accepted their hereditary notions as infallibly right, and read Scripture by their light.

Nothing can be more certain than that the truths proclaimed, on sufficient evidence, in nature, are as much a revelation, in their sphere, of the ways of God, as the higher disclosures of the Bible. The records of the marble tablets of the hills are traced by the finger of the Almighty as truly as were the characters on the tables of Sinai. To reject the witness of the skies or earth, or to refuse their story of His doings, is no less to refuse "Him that speaks from heaven" than if we turned away from the revelations of His written Word. Nor is it to be forgotten that a truth of natural science, sufficiently established, is henceforth beyond controversy, and cannot be impugned by any supposed meaning we may attach to particular texts. The sun, for example, is virtually at rest, and the earth moves, notwithstanding any array of verses our ancestors brought to disprove it.

It is of supreme importance, moreover, that we demand no more from Scripture than God intended it to yield. It was given to reveal Him to us and to make known His laws and will for our spiritual guidance, but not to teach us lessons in natural science. To expect them is to anticipate disappointment.

A little consideration will, in fact, make it evident that the sacred books could only express themselves according to natural appearances, and not in scientific terms, if they were to be understood in any age by the mass of men. We stand, even now, at the threshold of the secrets of nature, and habitually use language based

on the unscientific teaching of the senses. The ends of the earth—the rising and the setting of the sun—the overarching skies—are still familiar expressions, but are, of course, incorrect. If forced to lay them aside it would be hard to replace them by intelligible phrases which would be scientifically blameless. But, fifteen centuries before Christ, that is, when Moses lived, the language of natural appearances must have been universal, for science was as yet unborn. To use it was to employ what alone was then understood, or would be continuously intelligible in every future age, for no other mode of expressing physical truth would even now suit the mass of mankind.

Nor would it have been enough had Moses and the other sacred writers used scientific language suited to the present day. If they used such language at all, they must have done so with such exactness as to anticipate all the discoveries of the remotest future, and thus some texts would to the end of time have seemed as incorrect, from our ignorance, as others, written according to natural appearances, are foolishly said to be, from our partial scientific attainments.

It is not the object of Scripture, moreover, to reveal what we may ourselves discover, and it would have permanently enfeebled the mind of the race if the stimulus of research had been rendered unnecessary. Besides, we can neither receive nor utilize natural knowledge without a previous development and training of the faculties, only possible by the phenomena of nature being left for our own investigation. Great discoveries can be recognised as such only if the time be ripe for them, nor is any decisive step in intellectual advance more than the mere completion of a progress stretching through all the past. What any age does or thinks is

but the development of all that has been done and thought from the beginning. The connection of the sciences involves an advance in all, to make use of a further advance in any. How many links must there have been in the chain that led ultimately to the discovery of the true motions of the heavens? Egypt, Chaldea, Greece, Rome, and the Middle Ages had all contributed, whether by their errors or discoveries, to the conclusions on which Copernicus based the theory ultimately proved to be the true one. We cannot force unnaturally the education of mankind any more than that of an individual mind. Antiquity abounds with approaches to great discoveries which, after all, were not made, because the world was not ripe for them. Printing was all but discovered in Babylonia, where the habit of stamping clay tablets seemed inevitably to suggest it. There is a Roman ring in the British Museum with a device and some initials, engraved for stamping with ink as an attestation to documents. But the mind of the race had not as yet become fit to go further, and it was left to the awakened activity of a later age to see the supreme importance of such hints. It would, therefore, have been worse than useless, for Scripture to have anticipated scientific results which required an indefinite future to make them intelligible.

It must, therefore, be an error to look for the exactness of scientific statement in the Scriptures. They were given for a specific purpose and for that only, and in other matters use only the simple language of the senses which all ages from the earliest to the latest can understand.

Hence, while all are agreed in the testimony which Genesis bears to such leading truths as the self-existence of God, His unity, personality, and goodness, the creation of the world by Him, His absolute independence of, and

distinctness from it, the appearance of man as the latest production of the Almighty, and other matters, there has been the greatest difference in the explanations offered to harmonize the details of the sacred narrative with scientific facts.

On the first utterance of Scripture, indeed, that the earth, after its creation, lay in a state of chaos for unknown ages before order began to appear, there is a unanimity of assent, not only from the friends but from the critics of revelation.¹

Mr. Goodwin says, in the "Essays and Reviews"—"The first clear view which we obtain of the early condition of the earth, presents to us a ball of matter, fluid with intense heat, spinning on its own axis and revolving round the sun. How long it may have continued in this state is beyond calculation or surmise. It can only be believed that a prolonged period, beginning and ending we know not when, elapsed before the surface became cooled and hardened and capable of sustaining organized existences. The water which now enwraps a large portion of the face of the globe must for ages have existed only in the shape of steam, floating above, and enveloping the planet in one thick curtain of mist."² The meaning of the "days" of the Mosaic account has been the subject of frequent argument, some thinking them periods of twenty-four hours, others lengthening them to ages. Which opinion is correct is a matter of individual judgment, but men

¹ In the religion of Zoroaster (Zarathroustra) the universe and man are created by Ahouramazdu, the good and great god, in six successive periods, forming in all a year of 365 days. Man was created last, without stain. By the way, the Phenician name for our first mother is Havah—the same as the Hebrew, which we English as Eve. Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, p. 52.

² *Essays and Reviews*, p. 213.

equally orthodox have held both. The idea that they meant ages was advocated by Hugh Miller, who considered that he could identify the work of the fourth, fifth, and sixth days, respectively, with the geological phenomena of the earliest, middle, and later rocks; the presence of light before the visible appearance of the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day, being accounted for by the rising and dissipating of the dense veil of mist which till then had hidden them.¹ Godet explains the presence of light without the sun by the exceptional state of things in a world still intensely heated; a condition which might develop sources of light entirely independent of the sun, as we know is done in a disturbed state of the forces of nature.² Umbreit on the other hand turns away from natural explanations and introduces something higher, when he tells us that "the sun is only a single and special outflow from the source of light in God Himself, which must stream forth from Him on all manifestations of Himself such as creation."³

The distribution of the six days, whether regarded as periods or in the ordinary sense, so as to reconcile the apparent teaching of Scripture with the facts of geology, has exercised the ingenuity of a great many able writers. One of the latest of these may, perhaps, be taken as a sample of the rest, for as all differ in some particulars it would be wearisome to quote from any number of the theories offered. Professor Reusch, of Bonn,⁴ finds the first day's creation represented by what was a few years since represented as the Azoic period, or that in which no life was supposed to exist on our earth. But it is

¹ *Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 152, n.

² Godet: *Études Bibliques*, vol. i. p. 90.

³ *Studien und Kritiken* (1839), p. 192.

⁴ *Bibel und Natur*. (Freiburg, 1862.)

necessary to move back the opening of creation to a date still more inconceivably remote, since Sir William Logan and Professor Dawson have discovered what seem to be undoubted proofs of life, though only of the simplest kind, in the oldest known stratified rocks—the Laurentian group of Canada.¹ The second day Reusch fancies to represent the “Ferns, polypi, annelid or worm-like creatures, and crustacea,” of the Silurian and Devonian systems of rocks. But the upper Silurian rocks already contain the remains of fish, which were not created till the fifth day. The third day’s work is found by Dr. Reusch in the rise and wonderful development of the colossal vegetation of which we have the remains in the coal measures. But the remains of a cone-bearing tree are found in the Old Red Sandstone,²—a great bed of rocks belonging to the Silurian system, or at least underlying what was till latterly known as the Devonian—rocks already attributed to the work of the second day. The creation of birds and fish, which are the subject of the fifth day’s work in Genesis, is thought by Reusch to be illustrated by the fossils of the rocks stretching from above the coal measures to the Oolite, though not including it. But fishes had been created for long ages before these rocks were slowly deposited in the new oceans of this later period, by the wearing away of continents which had not risen from the deep when fish first made their appearance. It is doubtful if birds had as yet appeared, for some footprints found on the New Red Sandstone, in Connecticut, formerly thought to be those of a bird, are more probably the work of a reptile.³ The creation of quadrupeds and reptiles, assigned to the sixth

¹ *Eozoon; or, The Dawn of Life.* By Professor Dawson. (London, 1876.)

² *The Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 11.

³ Alleyne Nicholson’s *Palæontology*, 2nd edition, vol. ii. p. 252.

day, in connection with that of man, is supposed by Dr. Reusch to be represented by the periods of the Oolite, Lias, and Chalk. But though the Oolite and the Lias are marked by the abundant remains of gigantic reptiles, these were not the first of their order on our earth, for, ages on ages before, there had been reptiles during the coal-forming period.¹ As to quadrupeds, the remains hitherto found have been mostly limited to those of small marsupial, or pouched animals, like some now living in Australia. Moreover, between the Chalk and man there stretch out periods to be measured only by long successions of ages. Indeed, man finds a place at all only by extending the period supposed to represent the sixth day, over the vast series of revolutions from the time of the Oolite to the present—revolutions involving repeated changes of the land surface of vast regions, the wearing away of continents by the air, the rain, and the storm, and the slow growth of new mountain-high strata in the bottom of the ocean, from their dust.

It is clear from this abstract that it could not have been the design of God to give in the few opening lines of Genesis an exact scientific statement of the stages observed in creation. The sublime truth that nature was prepared step by step for the appearance of man, is the great lesson intended, and science corroborates it throughout. There has been, undoubtedly, from the beginning, a steady advance from lower to higher forms of life and vegetation. It is found indeed that Cuvier's arrangement of the animal kingdom is exactly that which the rocks exhibit.² Man is recognised by the highest authorities of modern science as beyond question the ideal being towards whose appearance "nature had been working from the earliest ages; a being therefore whose

¹ Jukes' *Geology*, p. 254. ² *Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 14.

existence had been foreordained." These are Professor Owen's words. Not less striking are those of Agassiz. "There is a manifold progress," says he, "in the succession of beings on the surface of the earth. This progress consists in an increasing similarity to the living fauna,¹ and, among the vertebrates especially, in their increasing resemblance to man. But this connection is not the consequence of a direct lineage between the faunas and floras² of different ages. There is nothing like parental descent among them. The fishes of the Palæozoic³ age are in no respects the ancestors of the reptiles of the Secondary age, nor does man descend from the mammals which preceded him in the Tertiary age. The link by which they are connected is of a higher and immaterial nature; and their connection is to be sought in the view of the Creator Himself, whose aim in forming the earth, in allowing it to undergo the successive changes which geology has pointed out, and in creating, successively, all the different types of animals which have passed away, *was to introduce man upon the surface of our globe. Man is the end towards which all the animal creation has tended, from the first appearance of the first Palæozoic fishes.*"

To revert for a moment to the reconciliations proposed between the work of the six days and the disclosures of science, perhaps the most satisfactory is that of the late Dr. McCaul, Professor of Hebrew in King's College. His essay, published in "Aids to Faith," is very able, and in many respects deserves attention. He holds that the first verse is an account of the original act of creation, which may have preceded the changes related in the rest of the chapter by millions of years. The existence of light is explained, as by Reusch, from the masses of re-

¹ Animal kingdom. ² Flora—the vegetable kingdom.

³ The age of ancient life.

volving cosmical vapour, the condensation of which, on the nebular theory, produced the world. It is not said, he adds, that the sun was created on the fourth day, but only that, with the moon and stars, it was then appointed to rule the day and night, and to measure time. The "days" are not to be measured by the sun, but by light and darkness, which God called day and night, and their length has not been revealed to us. They are, indeed, held to have been vast periods. The seventh day, like the other six, is an indefinite period, but the six creative periods cannot be identified with those of geology "from the fact that of the work of two days of the Mosaic account geology knows nothing, and astronomy nothing certain; namely, that of the first, on which the light was called forth; and of the fourth day, when the sun and the planetary system were perfected. Moses gives an outline of the history of creation, such as would be intelligible to those for whom he wrote, and suitable as an introduction to Divine revelation, and on both accounts necessarily limited in the matter and brief in the narration."

It is unnecessary to quote Dr. McCaul's full and learned discussions of Hebrew words, but his summary of results is admirable. "Moses relates how God created the heavens and the earth at an indefinitely remote period, before the earth was the habitation of man—Geology has lately discovered the existence of a long prehuman period. A comparison with other Scriptures shows that the 'heavens' of Moses include the abode of angels, and the place of the fixed stars, which existed before the earth. Astronomy points out remote worlds, whose light began its journey long before the existence of man. Moses declares that the earth was or became covered with water, and was desolate and empty. Geology has found by investigation that the primitive globe was covered with

■ uniform ocean, and that there was a long Azoic period, during which neither plant nor animal could live. Moses states that there was a time when the earth was not dependent on the sun for light or heat; when, therefore, there could be no climatic differences. Geology has lately verified this statement by finding tropical plants and animals scattered over all places of the earth. Moses affirms that the sun, as well as the moon, is only a light-holder. Astronomy declares that the sun is a non-luminous body, dependent for its light on a luminous atmosphere. Moses asserts that the earth existed before the sun was given as a luminary. Modern science proposes a theory which explains how this was possible. Moses asserts that there is an expanse extending from earth to the distant heights, in which the heavenly bodies are placed. Recent discoveries lead to the supposition of some subtle fluid medium in which they move. Moses describes the process of creation as gradual, and mentions the order in which living things appeared, plants, fishes, fowls, land animals, man. By the study of nature geology had arrived independently at the same conclusion. Whence did Moses get all this knowledge? How was it that he worded his rapid sketch with such scientific accuracy? If he in his day possessed the knowledge which genius and science have attained only recently, that knowledge is superhuman. If he did not possess the knowledge, then his pen must have been guided by superhuman wisdom.”¹

Aids to Faith, pp. 232-233.

It is curious to find Dean Colet so long ago as the dawn of our English Reformation, in treating the narrative of creation in Genesis, show a freedom and independent judgment which seem to anticipate the most modern spirit of inquiry. It is well to notice this fact in connection with the great father of English Protestantism, that no one may think harshly of good men whose

But while it is certain, to use the words of Bunsen,¹ "that it will be seen more and more as years pass, that the full light of science does not eclipse the truth of the Bible, but only leads us, by its discoveries, to understand the sacred pages aright, and shows more and more convincingly their imperishable worth," it is well to remember that their glory as a Divine revelation lies in a far higher sphere than that of mere physical studies. "The divine, in the Semitic revelation," he adds, "lies in its spiritual conceptions. On this account it is, and remains, the treasure of humanity; intelligible to the humblest, commanding the reverence of the wisest; the only story of the origin of our race which we can harmonize with our natural conception of God or with science."²

The following table is compiled from the 2nd edition³ of the *Manual of Paleontology* of Prof. Alleyne Nicholson, perhaps the greatest living authority in Britain, on ancient life. It indicates the succession of plant and animal life in the world, as far as at present known. The oldest rocks are naturally placed last, the others in the order of superposition.

KAINOZOIC, OR NEW LIFE.	POST TERTIARY.—That is, up to the present era. Man, sheep and goats, cave lion, huge kangaroos.
	PLIOCENE.—Swordfish, walrus, hares. The Tertiary vegetable world (including the rocks to the Eocene) was very much like what it is at present in hot and temperate climates.
	MIOCENE.—Oxen, elephants, bears, land tortoises (one in India 20 feet long and 7 feet high) sloths, whales, sperm whales, dolphins, rhinoceros, tapirs, camels, seals. Beasts of prey abounded. Beavers. Lichens.
	EOCENE.—Deer. Beasts of prey begin. Dogs, rats, mice, bats, lemurs, animals related to the horse, to the pig, to the tapir, to the whale. Snakes, crocodiles. Deer. Mammalia begin to abound. Sturgeon, Frogs and toads, newts and salamanders. Pillworts.

conclusions respecting this portion of the Mosaic writings may be different from one's own.

I may add, as an illustration of the slow growth of natural science, that Colet speaks of five elements: air, earth, fire, water, and ether. "Below the stars," says he, "are the inhabitants of fire and air." *Letters to Radulphus*, p. 14.

¹ *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 30. ² *Ibid.*, p. 35. ³ Edin. 1879.

MESOZOIC, OR MIDDLE LIFE.

CRETACEOUS (CHALK).—Fishes with bony skeletons begin. True sharks, huge lizards (75 feet long in some cases), crocodiles (America), gigantic extinct reptiles of Lias continue. Toothed birds. No mammalia found as yet in Chalk. First certain appearance of trees like the forest trees of our own temperate regions, the oak, beech, fig, poplar, walnut, willow, alder, etc. Also palms.

OOLITE, OR JURASSIC, (Lias, the lowest rocks).—Fourteen small mammals found in upper beds of Oolite. A single specimen (the earliest) of a bird. Turtles, lizard animals. In Lias and Oolite, gigantic extinct reptiles, the ichthyosaurus, plesiosaurus, megalosaurus, pterodactyle, and many others, in great numbers.

In Lower Oolite. Oldest known crab. Three or four small marsupial quadrupeds.

TRIASSIC.—Three or four small mammals found in the uppermost beds. Footprints, "in great part or wholly the work of reptiles." Crocodiles animals. Great animal, half reptile, half bird.

Marked change in the vegetation as compared with that of the Permian and Carboniferous periods. Abundance of *cycads*.

PERMIAN.—First undoubted remains of a reptile, the *protosaurus*. Turtles and tortoises. Vegetable world nearly related to that of the coal measures. Ferns, cone-bearing trees, etc., etc.

CARBONIFEROUS (Coal, limestone, etc.).—Sea snails, scorpions, spiders, millipedes, winged insects. The limestone in many places, over large areas, and for a thickness of many yards, almost entirely made up of the remains of stone lilies (*crinoidea*). The footprints of the *cheirotherium* (*handbeast*). Vertebræ of a large creature believed to be allied to a frog. Vegetable world much the same as that of the Devonian rocks. Fungi, cone-bearing trees, flowering plants, etc., etc., as in Devonian, gigantic club mosses and horsetails.

DEVONIAN.—Winged insects. This is the age of armoured fishes, the scales ganoid or enamelled, and hard as bone; forming a true armour. Plants abundant. Cone-bearing trees, ferns, tree ferns, club mosses, horsetails, tree allied to our hardwood trees. Representatives then flourished of almost all the great groups of plants which grow at present.

SILURIAN.—Starfish, sea urchins, creatures allied to sharks, stone lilies, trilobites, sea urchins. Bivalve shells related to oysters, cockles, etc., abound.

LOWER SILURIAN.—Worm-like creatures, cuttlefish, creatures allied to the nautilus, corals, zoophytes, stone lilies. Seaweeds, ferns, horsetails, club mosses, a cone-bearing tree (allied to the pines), tree allied to conebearers and to *cycads*.

CAMBRIAN.—Stone lilies, bivalve shells, shells like whelks, limpets, etc. Crustaceans of a low type allied to shrimps. Possibly, seaweeds.

HURONIAN.—

LAURENTIAN.—*Eozoon*—if an organized form?

Mr. St. George Mivart tells us that "The first known mammals of Europe and North America in the Permian and Oolite formations resembled forms now living in Australia; and at the time of the deposition of the oolite beds, '*cycads*' (trees related to both palms and tree ferns) and '*Araucarias*' (gigantic pines, of which the Norfolk Island pine is an illustration) inhabited England. Again, in Eocene times we had lemurs, true opossums,

PALÆOZOIC, OR ANCIENT LIFE.

tapirs, alligators, and gavials, simultaneously, in Europe, and chameleons in America, while the character of the fauna (the animals) of the southern part of South America seems to have been European. In Miocene times, long-armed apes, giraffes and rhinoceroses existed in Europe, while giraffes and oranges existed in India. Indeed, at that period, there appears to have been a rich fauna, more or less common to Asia, Europe, and Africa, from which the existing Indian and Ethiopian fauna have, as it were diverged, becoming increasingly different. In Pliocene times camels, rhinoceroses, elephants, and horses, all co-existed in North America as well as Europe; while later, in South America, huge precursors of the sloths ranged the forests (the trees of which they felled and fed on) as great marsupials in Australia preceded the smaller but closely allied marsupials of our own day."—*Contemporary Review* (Feb. 1880), p. 299.





CHAPTER V.

JEWISH IDEAS OF NATURE AND OF CREATION.

IT would be interesting and instructive if we could carry ourselves back to the simple age when Moses first told the story of the Creation to the multitudes of his people, lately slaves in Egypt, but now wandering in the desert spaces that hem round the Promised Land. What ideas could they have attached to the words which to us are so full of significance ?

The humble Jew, so lately toiling in the brickfields of Rameses, must have been in all intellectual respects a child of nature. His ideas of the world around him and the sky over him could have been formed only from the impressions of the senses, uncorrected by the reasonings or the discoveries of science. He had heard in Egypt that the sun was the supreme god and that the other heavenly bodies were divine ; that the Nile was no less sacred and supernatural, and that even the lower animals in the houses, the streets, and the fields, were in many cases sacred. It was only in his own hut that he had learned, perchance, of something higher and better, if his circle retained, after four hundred years, any remembrance of the Lord God of their fathers, whose very name had been forgotten by most of his race.¹

¹ Exod. iii. 13.

As to the world in which he lived, or the sky above him, what could he know? The first rude attempt at a map was a wonder to a king of Egypt nearly a thousand years after this,¹ and at a still later period the Tigris and Euphrates were the eastern bounds of the Hebrew world—the southern shore of the Black Sea, and the district stretching from it to the Caspian, his farthest north. In Europe he knew only the shore of the Mediterranean; Egypt and its western and southern territories summed up his knowledge of Africa.²

Nor need we boast, for the maps of our forefathers reveal almost as narrow conceptions of the world. A Mediæval map of the earth could not be recognised as such without careful study, as I shall have occasion to show in a future page.

The nearest approach we have to the ideas of the actual configuration and phenomena of the world in an age so remote as that of Genesis, is furnished by the ancient tablets of Nineveh, which reveal the notions entertained on these subjects by the race originally supreme in Mesopotamia—the so-called Accadians—whose glory had already departed before Abraham's day. The world, they thought, was a mere hollow convex skin, like a round boat or bowl. The upper surface was the earth with its waters; the concavity below, the abyss where the genii and the dead had their abode. Through this dark and cheerless region the sun made its way each night. Over the earth, the sky, studded with its fixed stars, stretched itself like a covering, and turned round the mountain of the east, the pillar which joins

¹ Anaximander of Miletus, B.C. 611–546, made the first attempt at a chart of the world. It was on brass. Eber's *Eine Ägyptische Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 208. Hecataeus, B.C. 520, made a second.

² See map by Merx. Schenkel's *Bibel Lexicon*. See p. 242.

heaven and earth and serves as an axis for the celestial vault. The centre of the earth, however, was different from that of the skies, for like many ancient nations, the Accadians fancied their own land in the very middle of the world, while the mountain over the peak of which the sky of the fixed stars revolves was in the north-west. The sky as a whole rested on the edge of the earth, outside a great circle of ocean waters, which they, like the Greeks and other ancient nations, believed surrounded the world. The planets moved in a heaven below that of the fixed stars, and were the sources of the thunder, which, again, by rending the clouds let the rain escape through their openings.¹

The ideas of physical science and natural phenomena which prevailed in the second century before Christ must have been far in advance of those of the days of Moses, thirteen hundred years earlier, and thus may help us to realize the notions of the ordinary Hebrew of that remote age. By a fortunate chance we find many of these in the Jewish Book of Enoch of that date,² from which the following are taken. What must have been the simplicity of the mind which could write as follows: "And they took me away to the place of the storm wind and to a mountain whose peaks reached to heaven. And I saw bright shining places³ and the thunder at the ends of them. And they took me to the so-called water of life, and to the fire of the west⁴ which receives every setting of the sun. And I came to a fiery stream, where fire flows like

¹ Lenormant: *La Magie chez les Chaldéens*, p. 140.

² *Das Buch Henoch*. Ed. Dillmann.

³ The places where the light is stored up and from which the lightnings come.

⁴ The fire of the west is a great fire ocean into which the sun dips each night to take up fresh fire for the next day.

water, and pours itself into a great sea towards the west. And I saw all the great rivers, and came to a great darkness, and went on to where all the dead wander about. And I saw the mountains of the black clouds of winter and the place into which the waters of the whole Deep pour themselves. And I saw the mouths of all the streams of the world and the mouth of the Deep.¹

“And I saw the storehouses of the winds and the foundations of the earth. And I saw the corner-stone of the earth and the four winds which bear up the earth and the firmament of heaven. And I saw how the winds spread out the heights of the heavens, and they blow between heaven and earth and are the pillars of heaven. And I saw the winds that turn the heavens, and bring the circuit of the sun and of all the stars to their setting. And I went farther towards the south, where it burns, day and night, where the seven mountains of precious stones are.” Beyond this he came to a place “where heaven and earth come to an end, and it serves for a prison for the stars of heaven and for the host of heaven. The stars which roll over the fires are those which have broken the commands of God by not rising at the time appointed them, and He was angry with them and bound them till the time when their punishment should be fulfilled.”²

“ . . . From thence I went to the ends of the earth on which the heaven rests, and I saw the doors of heaven open. And I saw how the stars of heaven came out, and counted the doors from which they came out. . . . From thence I went to the north and saw the ends of the earth there. Here I saw these doors of heaven open. From each of these come out north winds: when they

¹ Apparently the ocean which was thought to flow round the earth.

² *Das Buch Henoch*, Kap. 17, 18.

blow it brings cold, hail, hoarfrost, snow, dew, and rain. When it blows only from one of these doors it is good, but when it blows from the others, it storms and brings distress on the earth.¹

"From thence I went to the south, to the ends of the earth there, and saw there open doors in the heaven. From out of these come forth the south wind, the dew, rain, and wind. Thence went I to the ends of the heaven at the east, and saw there three doors of heaven open, and over them little doors. Through each of these little doors come out the stars of heaven, and run towards the west on the way which is shown to them.²

". . . And then I saw closed storehouses from which the winds are sent abroad, and the storehouses of the hail and of the mist and of the clouds. And I saw the houses of the sun and of the moon, from which they go forth and to which they return, and how they add nothing to their prescribed course and take nothing from it, and keep truth one with another, holding to their oath.³ . . . And I saw again lightnings and the stars of heaven, and I saw how the angel called them all to him by name and they hearkened to him. And I saw how they are weighed out with just balances, according to their light, and the distance of their course, and the time of their appearing and circuits, and how one lightning begets the other, and their circuits, according to the number of the angels, and how they keep truth among themselves. Also, another thing saw I concerning the lightnings, how some stars become lightnings and nothing is left of the stars.⁴

"And I saw six doors from which the sun goes forth,

¹ *Das Buch Henoch*, Kap. 33, 34.

² *Ibid.*, Kap. 36.

³ *Ibid.*, Kap. 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Kap. 43, 44. This refers to "shooting stars."

and six doors into which it passes in setting; the moon also rises and sets through these doors, and the leaders of the stars, with the stars which they lead. I saw also many windows right and left of these doors. And first goes forth the great light called the sun. The waggon in which it rises upwards is driven by the wind, and, when it sets, the sun vanishes from heaven and returns by the north, to get to the east again, and is so led that it comes to the proper door and shines in the heaven. In this way it rises through the great door, in the first month, the fourth of the six doors of the east. And in that fourth door, through which the sun rises in the first month, are twelve windows, from which, when at their appointed time they are opened, a flame comes forth. The sun rises through that fourth door for thirty days, and goes straight over to the fourth door of the west and sets through it. . . . Then it returns to the fifth door for thirty mornings, and sets through the fifth door in the west for as long, and so, next, with the sixth doors in the east and west, for thirty-one mornings." Having completed this series of changes they are then repeated backwards from the sixth door, successively, to the first door, the changes making the difference of the length of day and night round the year. "And so it rises and sets and never ceases or rests, but goes on day and night in its waggon, and its light is seven times as great as that of the moon, but in size the two are alike."² "And I saw twelve doors in the round of the sun-waggon in heaven from which the beams of the sun break forth, and from them goes forth heat over the earth, when they are opened in their season." "And I saw waggons in the heavens such as there are on the earth, in which the never setting stars move."³

¹ *Das Buch Henoch*, Kap. 43, 44. ² *Ibid.*, Kap. 72. ³ *Ibid.*, Kap. 75.

The writer's knowledge of the earth is on a par with that of the heavens. He tells us that the earth has exactly seven highest mountains, seven greatest rivers, and seven greatest islands. It is hard to decide what mountains he means, but the rivers are less doubtful. The first comes from the West and pours itself into the "Great Sea"—that is, the Mediterranean. This is undoubtedly the Nile, which is conceived as flowing from the south-west, if indeed "west" be not a corruption for "south." Two, which must be the Euphrates and Tigris, come from the north, and pour their waters into the "Erythræan Sea," the common name for the Arabian and Persian Gulfs and the Indian Ocean. The four others "come from the north to their sea, two to the Erythræan Sea, two empty themselves in the Great Sea, or according to some in the wilderness." The Indus and the Ganges, which rise north of the writer, seem to be meant by the first two, the Oxus and Jaxartes by the others; the Black and Caspian Seas being supposed part of the Mediterranean. But perhaps "they lose themselves in the desert," that is, in Arabia! There is no mention of Europe at all, and Africa is known only by the Nile, while Eastern Asia is a mere dim imagination. Of the seven greatest islands two are on the land; that is, are land lying between rivers. These would be, apparently, Mesopotamia, and the island of Meröe on the Nile. Five are in "the Great Sea," the Mediterranean, and are no doubt Cyprus, Crete, and Rhodes, with perhaps Sicily, and the Morea, which might easily be fancied an island.¹ So small was the world to the Jew even in the days immediately before Christ.

If the heavens and the earth were so limited to His remote posterity, what must they have been to the

¹ *Das Buch Henoch*, Kap. 77.

wondering minds of those who looked out on them from the tents of the forty years wandering? How must the words of the first chapter of Genesis have sounded when they were heard for the first time, in all their startling contrast with the ideas of creation till then unchallenged? We can fancy the tribes assembled in the great "plains" of Wady es Sheykh and of Wady er Rahah, or of Wady Sebaijeh, under the mighty cliffs of Sinai,¹ rising terrace above terrace around, to hear the first reading of the book of the covenant;² the cloud of the Presence covering the mount, and the awful splendours of the Divine glory lighting through it "like devouring fire." The first words as they fell from the lips of Moses or of the elders, and sounded far over the listening thousands, through the clear Eastern air, were themselves a stupendous revelation. Hitherto they had heard, in Egypt, for centuries, of Osiris and Horus, and a countless multitude of gods. They had seen men worshipping the sun as the great king of heaven, and the stars and moon as lesser deities, and they were soon to show in the demand for a golden calf, the Egyptian symbol of the gods Apis and Mnevis,³

¹ Stanley (*Sinai and Palestine*, p. 42) supposes the former two open spaces the scene of the assemblies of the people. Furrer (Schenkel's *Bibel Lex.*, art. Sinai) thinks the latter the place. The various neighbouring peaks of the Sinai group range from 6,500 to 8,000 feet in height above the sea level.

² Exod. xxiv. 7.

³ Amos v. 25, has been referred to the period of the wilderness life, but Assyrian study shows it to have been spoken of Amos' own day. Schrader translates the verse "Ye will, therefore, take up Sakkoth your king, and Kewan, your star-god—your idols—which you have made for yourselves, and I will lead both you and them into captivity." Sakkoth, in Assyrian = Adar, an ox-faced god = Saturn = Moloch. Kewan (Assyrian) = Saturn. *Studien und Kritiken* (1874), pp. 324-332.

that the gross ideas of the Nile valley had sunk deep into their minds.

But now they hear that "In the beginning, One, only God created the heavens and the earth;" created, not fashioned them. What the "beginning" meant they could have understood as little as we, but it at least destroyed the universal belief of their day that nature was self-existing and eternal. They had no grand ideas of the vastness of the universe such as our astronomy has awakened. The High and the Low was their only conception of sky and earth. Nor had they even a word for the universe in our sense.¹ What they saw around and over them in the horizon of day or the splendours of night, was to them the creation. All this they now heard was the work of Elohim, a name conveying to them the conception of power and might, and in its plural form that of awful and incomparable majesty.² Henceforth it becomes the glory of Israel, too often indeed to be forgotten by many, but yet to be treasured by the faithful, till at last it becomes the passionate boast of all, that this one living God summed up in Himself the power and glory of all the idols of Egypt and of the nations. From this time the great spirits of their race, age after age, realize Him as He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth; before whom its inhabitants are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,

¹ See Umbreit, in *Studien und Kritiken* (1866), pp. 706 ff.

² Elohim is the plural, and is used as we use the plural pronoun in speaking of royalty, or even in common conversation. Thus we use "you" constantly for "thou." Some have fancied that the plural form is a relic of polytheistic usage, wrested from its primitive force by the Hebrews, and consecrated to the One God alone. It may be that this is so, but the usage does not require such an explanation. See note, p. 11.

and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.¹ The moment of such a revelation was a supreme instant in the history of the world.

As the words of the second verse sounded forth—"And the earth was waste and wild, and darkness rested upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit, or breath, of God brooded upon the face of the waters"—a vision of universal desolation and darkness would rise before the awe-stricken multitudes; of a heaving, fathomless, incomprehensible abyss, tumultuous like the stormy ocean, which they had seen so lately when they crossed its dried bed. There was a time, then, they would think, when these sky-piercing mountains, at whose foot they stood, were not, nor the great sky, nor the wide earth; when there was only a shoreless surging chaos, veiled in night and terror; a waste lighted by no beams of sun or stars. But over this, when it pleased Elohim, His spirit went forth to brood, dove-like, and wake it to life and order. To us the picture is familiar from infancy, but what must it have seemed when first proclaimed.

But now they hear—"And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." So then the mighty light is the first-born of God. He Himself remains unseen and unimagined, but His approach, to form a world, is heralded by the glorious splendours of day. No sun is mentioned; the mind is left to think only of the face of God. It is His coming nigh, covered with light as with a garment, the light of an Eastern sky; veiling Himself in the insufferable brightness that fills the wide earth and heaven. Presently, before Him, the horror of thick darkness, terrible as that of the land of the shadow of death, rolls away like clouds before the sun, and the weltering chaos lies in brightness.

¹ Isaiah xl. 22.

In Egypt they had worshipped Seb, the principle of evil, as well as Osiris, the beneficent; but now they heard that Elohim reigns alone, as the Author of good, for the sacred light was good, and He had sent it. Henceforward, they hear, it was appointed that the light and the darkness should each have its separate place,¹ its special nature, and its fixed time of appearing. So day and night are alike the gift of God, and both alike are full of His presence. Primeval darkness, before which they had trembled, He has called night, "the veiled and dark;" the holy light is to be known as Day, "the shining." And so the first day has ended, not as with us, in darkness, but, as if in auspicious augury for our world, with the bursting forth of the new created light.

And now, as the voice of the speaker proceeds, a new scene opens. The wild and waste landscapes of chaos stretch out, cleared of the mantle of mists and vapours till now lying dense upon them, and a wide expanse appears, bearing up the clouds into which these had been transformed. The blue sky overcanopies all, with its ministries of rain and dew, so grateful in the burning East; for the firmament is the storehouse of both, and it is thence that they drop fatness over the land. How the waters rise and are sustained aloft the simple Hebrew does not dream, except that it is by the power of God; nor does he know more of the aerial heights than that they are "the expanse," or "the high," in which the clouds and rains have their appointed place.²

¹ Job xxvi. 10; xxxviii. 19.

² I cannot forbear quoting the following magnificent passage from John Ruskin, a man in my opinion not less great as a prose poet, or as the foremost art critic of the age, than for the still higher glory of his splendid unselfishness; his constant

There is now sky and light, and chaos, but presently there is another advance, showing that God is a God of order, working out His ends by successive regulated steps. His voice is anon heard commanding the waters

labours in every direction to benefit his fellow men; his lofty conception of the claims of Christianity and his practical homage to that standard.

"An unscientific reader knows little about the manner in which the volume of the atmosphere surrounds the earth; but I imagine that he could hardly glance at the sky when rain was falling in the distance, and see the level line of the bases of the clouds from which the shower descended, without being able to attach an instant and easy meaning to the words, 'expansion in the midst of the waters.' And if, having once seized the idea, he proceeded to examine it more accurately, he would perceive at once, if he had ever noticed anything of the nature of the clouds, that the level line of their bases did indeed most severely and stringently divide 'waters from waters,' that is to say, divide water in its collected and tangible state from water in its divided and aerial state; or the waters which *fall* and *flow* from those which *rise* and *float*. I understand the making the firmament to signify that (so far as man is concerned) most magnificent ordinance of the clouds; the ordinance that as the great plain of waters was formed in the face of the earth, so also a plain of waters should be stretched along the height of air, and the face of the cloud answer the face of the ocean; and that this upper and heavenly should be of waters, as it were, glorified in their nature, no longer quenching the fire, but now bearing fire in their own bosoms; no longer murmuring only when the winds raise them, or rocks divide, but answering each other with their own voices from pole to pole; no longer restrained by established shores, and guided through unchanging channels, but going forth at His pleasure like the armies of the angels and choosing their encampments on the height of the hills: no longer hurried downwards for ever, moving but to fall, nor lost in the lightless accumulation of the abyss, but covering the East and the West with the waving of their wings, and robing the gloom of the farther infinite with a vesture of divers colours, of which the threads are purple and scarlet, and the embroideries flame."

to gather together to one place, and the dry land to appear. The great Seas and the firm Earth assume their bounds. The mountains and dry land rise from the deep, and the waters that couch under, retire within the girdle of their shores. Israel learns that it was God who by Himself established the world and set fast the everlasting hills.

Presently they hear,—How, at the Almighty word, the slopes of the hills and the sweeping valleys are clothed with the tender grass, strewn with flowers, and roughened with waving forests. The lifting up of the mountains had created rivers; the calling forth of verdure and shadowing trees completes the ideal of joy to these children of the burning East. How must it have sunk into the hearts of all, to use the words of their own singer of other ages, that it is God, great and good, “who caused the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil that maketh his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.” Could it then have been known that the grasses which yield this bread had been specially created for man’s use, at his appearance on the earth, and did not belong to those earlier works of God of which we find the remains stored up for fuel, or bedded in the depths of the everlasting hills, the gratitude would have been still more vivid. For it is a great fact that while trees and plants of many kinds are found in formations of all the geological periods but the earliest, the grain-bearing grasses only came into existence when man appeared. There is not the slightest vestige of them in any of the strata; they are found only in surface deposits, in connection with the first signs of human presence. Along with them also, strange to say, are first found the herbs that

minister to our pleasure, of which the sage, the marjoram, the mints and lavenders,¹ are representatives—and still more striking, the fruits that delight the taste and maintain the health, the apple and all its related trees, the peach, the plum, the almond, the strawberry, and the like.² The Hebrew was doubtless filled with wonder at the goodness that had prepared the great table of nature for man so richly, but we may doubly feel it when we know that the round earth was filled with the finest of the wheat, and adorned with roses and flowers and luscious fruits, and made fragrant with mint and spike-nard and frankincense, to greet man's birth.

As yet, however, the multitudes had heard nothing of the creation of the heavens except the spreading out of the expanse above the earth. But now they learn that on the fourth day God commanded the two great "light-bearers" of the sky, and the great host of the stars, to shine forth, and serve their purpose to the new created world. Other nations worshipped them as, themselves, living and divine, but it was not to be so in Israel. They were only the creation of God's hand, and the obedient servants of His will. To man they would cheer day and night—the sun, the ruler of the day, the moon the queen of night; the stars, so preternaturally bright in Eastern lands, attending her and adding to the brightness. They would, moreover, serve for Signs, to mark out the heavenly spaces, to warn men of the storm, or give them hopes of brightness, and by their eclipses and changes, to teach the ways of God—and they would fix the Times, throughout the year, for man's ordinances or employments, the weeks, the months, the years themselves, the days of festivals and worship, with much besides. The keynote

¹ The Labiatae.

² The Rosaceae. See *Macmillan's Bible in Nature*, p. 100.

thus struck gave the tone henceforward to the relations of Israel to nature worship. The vaulted heavens were but the work of God's fingers: He had ordained the moon and the stars. What an education for a people; filling their hearts with thoughts till then unknown!

The heavens, lighted with sun and moon, and sown with stars, now shine down on the earth, but as yet there is no life. All things, however, are now ready for it, and the sacred roll tells forthwith, how God, advancing step by step, in Divine order, next spoke into being all things that fly, and all that swim; the tribes of the air and of the waters—the two blue oceans, one over, one around; the birds and other creatures, small and great, to sail through the one; the fishes and sea beasts, through the other. Nor can we think there would be wanting a response of reverent filial love, when it was heard that the Eternal, forthwith, blessed His new made creatures. It would be theirs to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the seas and the earth. The teeming increase of the finny tribes was due to the bounty of Elohim, and He had given the bird its joyous life in the wide air. All are His, and all look up to Him. The thought thus awakened sank into the national mind. In after ages the Hebrew poet was to sing:—

Beside the springs which Thou sendest into the valleys;
 The springs which run among the hills, . . .
 The fowls of the air have their habitation,
 Which sing among the branches. . . .
 In the great and wide sea—
 Are creeping things innumerable,
 Both small and great. There go the ships,
 There is that leviathan which Thou hast made to play therein.
 These wait all upon Thee!
 That Thou may'st give them their meat in due season.¹

¹ Ps. civ. 10, 12, 25-27.

The air and the waters now rejoice in living tribes, but the earth itself has as yet no such gladness. Now, however, God brings forth from it living creatures of all kinds; cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth; the wild tribes of the woods and of the deserts; cattle of all kinds for the use of man, but also the serpents and worms, and footless creeping things; and once more pronounces His blessing on all. Even the dreaded reptile and the humble worm, and the fierce tribes of the woods are His creatures, as well as the useful and loved. All things are from Him alone! No evil spirit has had a share in Nature, as the nations have dreamed. The heavens with their lights; the earth with its mountains and seas, its cedars and fruitful trees; the waters with their swarming populations, the air with its multitudinous life, already praised the Creator; and now the cattle on a thousand hills, and the beasts of the forest are added to the number of His works. Lesson is quickly following lesson, to form the creed of humanity. Centuries after, such teaching finds an echo in the words of Job, so well had it been learned—

Ask now the beasts, that they may teach thee,
The birds of the heaven, that they may let thee know;
Or inquire of the earth, that it may instruct thee,
And let the fishes of the sea give thee knowledge:—
Who knows not, among all these,
That the hand of God hath created the whole?
He, in whose hands are the souls of all living things,
And the breath of all mankind!¹

But among all the creatures none had yet appeared able to honour and worship the great Creator. Each race depended on a higher, but the highest of beings yet

¹ Job xii. 7-10. Ewald's version. The date of Job is apparently the 7th century, B.C. So, G. Baur, Merse, Ewald, Bleek, De Wette.

made had neither reason nor the faculties of spiritual life. Now, however, it is told how man was created in God's image, of the dust of the ground, and endowed with a living soul from the breath of the Almighty Himself. What that "image" meant to the Hebrew it is easy to imagine. God had been revealed to him as holy and just and pure, and he felt in his own breast the capacity to know what such attributes meant, and to imitate them in his own soul. God was the Highest wisdom, and he felt that he had himself caught a beam of His nature in the possession of reason with all its powers. God was the Sovereign Lord of man himself, of all the creatures, and of the inanimate glories of heaven and earth. The Hebrew felt that in this respect he was the representative of the Creator to the animal world;¹ for all feared him—all were made subject to him or might be made so, for pleasure, or for use. He had seen, in Egypt, the lion trained to hunt for his master, and leave the prey he caught uneaten, himself returning to his master's side,² the cat trained to fetch the wounded bird from the thickets of the Nile, and even the hyæna tamed and made of use.³ He had watched the Egyptian harpoon and noose the huge hippopotamus, and catch and drag by force, to shore, the hideous crocodile.⁴ Even the powers of nature were strangely subject to his will,—for the air filled the sail, the rocks were quarried into temples, the mines yielded their wealth, and the wisdom of the Egyptian priests had searched out many secrets of plants, and minerals, and even

¹ Goethe's saying in this light, is striking: "Man is the dog's god."

² Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 221.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 238.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i. pp. 241-3.

some mysteries of the distant stars and of the planets. Such endowments bespoke the possession of the Image of God. But, if so then, how much more so now, when man has made the lightning his messenger, and laid a pathway for it in the depths of the seas, to run forth on his will;—has tamed the thunder;—crosses the ocean in the face of wind and storm;—has climbed into the skies and descended to the bottom of the waters;—has pierced the hills to make himself a way, and passes from place to place at the speed of a bird.

Nor were the very form of man,—erect, noble, looking to heaven, for man alone naturally looks upwards,—and this fair body,—only the veil and image and instrument of the soul within,—less divine. Between the lordly Adam and all creatures else, how great the gulf!

The Mosaic account of creation carried all this, and much besides, to the hearts even of those who first received it. So great a revelation had never been made to man, for it disclosed the existence of the One Eternal, Holy, Just and Good God,—a God of wisdom and order, as well as purity and truth, and implied His right to our absolute obedience and love, as the work of His hands. There remained only another self-disclosure, of still greater condescension, when He declared Himself to mankind in the person of His incarnate Son.¹

¹ On the ideas of creation among those who first heard the record of Genesis, see Herder's *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*, pt. i.





CHAPTER VI.

THE AGE OF THE WORLD.

THE mysterious era of the creation of the world must be kept carefully distinct from that of the creation of man. With the former Scripture has nothing to do; the latter is abundantly vindicated by the corroboration of advancing knowledge.

But while the inconceivable remoteness of the creation of our earth, and the vast periods through which it has been slowly brought to the condition in which man appeared on it, are subjects apart from the direct scope of Bible illustration, they so vividly aid us to realize the greatness and glory of the Creator, that a few pages devoted to them cannot be out of place.

The discoveries of geology have conclusively proved that periods vast beyond imagination must have elapsed since the first stages of the history of our earth. The thickness of the solid crust of rocks, which hides the fiery secrets of the interior, has been variously estimated at from a few miles, to six hundred, or even two thousand five hundred,¹ but the wide contrast in these estimates is, itself, enough to show how little reliance can be placed on any of them. Yet it must have taken incalculable

¹ The second is the view of Mr. Hopkins, the third that of Sir Wm. Thompson.

ages for the glowing surface to have cooled sufficiently to make possible even the first of the great sedimentary deposits, forming the lowest stratified rocks. Nor could the oldest water-formed beds now surviving be the earliest rocks that existed, for they must of course, themselves, have been the result of the slow wearing away of others still earlier.

Avoiding as much as possible anything like difficult terms, the story of our earth, so far as hitherto made out by science, leads us, apparently, to a time when the vast round on which we live was only slowly condensing, by the various attractions and revolutions of the solar system. Men of eminence favour the idea that worlds like ours were gradually consolidated from the nebulous matter which abounds in all regions of the heavens; believing that the currents and eddies of the universe, aiding the attractions and combinations of matter, were the agencies used by the Almighty in their original imperceptible growth and building up. It is argued, indeed, that this very process is now seen going on in one case, at least, among the planets—that of Saturn, and that the nebulae so common, and so marked by their spiral or whorl-like, or fantastic shapes; if in some cases aggregates of stars, are in others the loose material of growing worlds. Nor is there anything contrary to Scripture in such a theory, for we are told nothing of the mode in which God created the universe, whether perfect at once, or growing and blossoming into worlds by the slow ripening of what to us would be innumerable ages. He carves out mountains and valleys, now, by the slow and feeble agencies of winds and rains and dews: why should He not, if He choose, build up worlds with as calm deliberation, through the unresting, unhasting progress of His own laws? Enough for us that the matter that forms

them is His creation, and the skill that moulds that matter into the wonders of a world, His alone.

The first clear view we obtain of the early condition of the earth, shows us a ball of matter, fluid with intense heat, spinning on its own axis and revolving round the sun.¹ How long this state of things continued is beyond calculation or surmise, but it is evident that a period of immense length must have passed before the heated mass had so far cooled down and hardened as to present a solid foundation for the future elaboration of God's plans. The restless waters which now fill the vast hollows of the earth's surface, or glide through its valleys, must have existed for ages only as a dense curtain of steam, shrouding and muffling the glowing centre beneath. But contraction, due to cooling would, meanwhile, rend and shrivel the world into the roughness of hill and dale, while the fiery energies within would upheave its surface into mountains or depress it into ocean beds.

When, at last, the cooling of the surface permitted the waters to condense and descend, the first step in the formation of the vast beds of rock which now form an aggregate thickness of miles, began. Rains, ocean currents, the action of the air, and the flow of rivers and torrents, commenced their slow labours in the wearing away this earliest land, and carrying it into the watery depths, to be spread out in layers, or "strata." How soon life appeared is unknown, for the lowest water-born or "stratified" rocks are so changed in their substance by the fierce heat then prevailing, that all traces of animal or vegetable organisations must have been destroyed in their lower sections. Vast accumulations of gneiss, thousands of feet thick, the worn ruin of granite mountains, attest the length of this earliest chapter in world-

¹ C. W. Goodwin, M.A., *Essays and Reviews*, p. 214.

history. But even in the beds of this remotest period—known as the Laurentian gneiss of Lower Canada—science has discovered what seems to some to be the remains of a living organism¹—a curiously perfect coralline structure of a type peculiar to these rocks. The presence of an early vegetation also seems implied in some mineral remains that have been found. The rocks in which these first known existences present themselves were, however, doomed, like all things in nature, to pass away. Seamed and furrowed into a mere skeleton of their original vastness, they slowly sank again below the ocean, and other systems began to be deposited on their broken outline. For it is to be remembered that the stony ribs of our earth were in no case formed over all the world at once, but always, just as at present, only over areas more or less restricted. The elevations and subsidences of the earth's surface have always been local; one portion rising as another sank, in answer to the retreats and advances of the fiery energies within. Further, each successive continent, with its mountains and plains, has from the first been wearing away piecemeal, even before it rose from the ocean waters, for the seas were at work to destroy their own creations before they had emerged from their depths.

Fancy, now, on the broad back, or on the upturned edges of the lowest existing strata, other beds slowly deposited, from the dust of mountains and valleys, or from the wreck of shells and plants, or by slow chemical precipitation from the waters; as in the case of the vast mountain depths of limestones in every age of the world.

¹ *Eozoon; or, The Dawn of Life*, by J. W. Dawson, LL.D. (1876). Prof. Alleyne Nicholson (*Manual of Palæontology*, 2nd ed., vol. i. p. 104) leaves it an open question whether Eozoon be not merely a crystalline marking. See, before, page 44.

Through what spaces of time must the Almighty have been slowly working? It has been the same alike with the long succession of the rocks, and of the races they entomb. These, also, have flourished for their day and then have given place to others. As with man himself, so with the scenery of the solid world. Each series of landscapes may have had a longer day than short-lived humanity, but Homer's fine comparison of the succession of the generations of men to the budding and fall of the leaves of summer, is as true of the hills as of the fading race to whom they seem eternal.

Like as the generation of leaves, so also that of men;
For the wind strews the leaves on the ground; but the forest,
Putting forth fresh buds, grows on, and spring will presently
return.

Thus with the generation of men; the one blooms, the other fades
away.¹

The Huronian and Cambrian periods show an aggregate depth of from four to six miles of slate rocks and hard sandstones, often greatly changed by the internal heat of the earth, but all formed, through ages we cannot even imagine, by the same immeasurably slow process by which similar beds are doubtless even now rising, at the bottom of some lake or sea, from the mud, clay, sand and pebbles of existing mountains and valleys, borne into them by rivers and floods. Stone lilies, bivalve shells, the casts and pipes of worms and polyps, shrimp-like shapes, shells like limpets, and slight impressions of one knows not what other simple organisms, or possibly of seaweeds, alone remain as witnesses of the life of these ancient seas.

But the world of these ages slowly passed away, and in its place, as slowly, rose that of the Lower and

¹ *Iliad*, vi. 146.

Upper Silurian periods, represented by an immense series of slate rocks, flagstones, and sandstones, lime-stones, and conglomerates, many thousand feet in thickness. Simple shells and humble creatures, perfect in their structure, but allied to no higher classes than shrimps, crabs, and lobsters, or to sea urchins and starfishes, reigned for ages as the prevailing types of the life of the Lower Silurian seas, while the stone lilies, a kind of starfish growing in a jointed stem, with its body bent into a cup, and its fingers divided into numerous jointed strings and threads, became the most noted living form of the earlier ages of the Upper period. But the types of life prevailing in the lower beds already show, in these earliest ages, the constant law of evanescence which marks all things in nature; for some had, even thus soon, passed almost wholly away. Others, however, as if to assert the unity of design which reigns from first to last in creation, still survive, through all the changes of land and sea which have so often made and remade our earth. But new forms appear in the Upper Silurian and Devonian beds, marking an advance in the Creator's plans. Along with the remains of huge lobster-like creatures, are found the teeth and shagreen of fish allied to the shark, and the indestructible forms of others, of a type perhaps marking an age when the ocean was as yet far warmer than now—fish clad in bony mail, doubtless the terror of the seas they inhabited. Creatures of the vertebrate type, though of its humblest order, had thus at last appeared. The Devonian rocks or Old Red Sandstone, in their thickness of at least two miles, show many types of these strange forms; but there is a further advance in nature by the appearance of the earliest known tree vegetation, a true cone-bearer.¹ Plants, like humble club mosses and

¹ *Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 11.

minute ferns, are found in the lower beds, and these are followed by large ferns, and by analogues of the fir or pine, whose dark shadow was the first cast on our world, so far as we know, by any kind of tree. In the upper beds, indeed, trees are found allied to our hardwood varieties, and representatives flourished of almost all the great families of plants which grow at present. There were even winged insects.

The Coal-forming Ages now began to heap up their various beds, in succession, on the Old Red Sandstone, to a depth of one and a half to two and a half miles.¹ The outburst of vegetation during this era speaks of a condition of air and earth unknown before or since. The heavy veil of clouds that had hitherto shrouded the world must have gradually become thinned and broken by the advancing coolness of the earth, permitting the sun to shine down more and more brightly. The atmosphere would still, however, be loaded with a great excess of carbonic acid gas, and the climate over the whole world must have been close and sultry, from the radiation of the still high internal heat. Local climate, or zones of greater heat and cold, were as yet unknown, for coal is found in every latitude, from the poles to the equator. Indeed, it is a striking fact that from the earliest ages to that of the Chalk there is no evidence of any belts of climate like those familiar to us now. The arctic zone, throughout all this immeasurable period, had the same warmth as the then existing Switzerland.² The earth seems indeed, during these vast cycles, to have drawn a continuous summer from its own warmth, rather than from the sun alone. Nearly half the plants of the coal ages were ferns, but some of them grew as high as trees, while

¹ Jukes' *Geology*, p. 222.

² Heer's *Primeval World of Switzerland*, vol. ii. p. 268.

gigantic club mosses and horsetails vied with huge pines, often rising over a hundred feet from the humid and steaming soil. Along with these a due proportion of humbler plants grew into deep beds, filling up lakes and morasses, age after age, till the slow sinking of the ground covered them with the silt and mud beneath which they now lie buried. Coal-beds, indeed, are simply forests and fens that have flourished near the water's edge, and have settled so imperceptibly, that the roots of the trees still remain in the soil as they grew, and even light seeds of plants have not been drifted away. But how long must it have taken for the growth of such masses of vegetation as now form thick beds of coal, under the pressure of vast layers of rock? And what periods are represented by the sinking of these beds to the depths at which we now find them. Seedtime and harvest were as measured in their succession then as now. Life had its seven ages in the various creatures existing, as in their analogues now. Spiders hunted their prey among the leaves, butterflies flitted in the glades, fish swarmed in the waters then as to-day. Yet the ages on ages of the Coal Measures are only a day in the history of our world!

Space will not permit the going into longer detail; a few paragraphs more must suffice. Even yet we have not reached the limits of what is called the Primary epoch of geology. Above the Coal Measures lie Sandstones and the Magnesian limestone 400 and 500 feet thick, with higher types of fish, formed in all respects like those of the present. Conglomerate rocks, formed of fragments of others, lie also heaped up to the thickness of 1,000 feet, but, above this vast aggregate still rise before us the great series of rocks known as those of the periods of "middle" and of "recent" life.¹ Three thousand feet of marls, sand-

¹ The three names are Palæozoic, Mesozoic, and Kainozoic.

stones, beds of pebbles, freestone, and great beds of rock salt and gypsum, known as the New Red Sandstone or Triassic rocks, now meet us. The Oolites come next, 3,000 feet thick, showing the first birds and quadrupeds, and the reign of reptiles huge almost as whales; then the Chalk with its clays, etc., to a thickness of 1,200 feet. The Period of Recent Life only now begins; its lowest rocks showing only 5 per cent. of their fossils still existing. These beds represent, in Britain, about 2,500 feet of sands, clays, grits, limestone, marls, etc. From 20 to 30 per cent. of the fossils of the next period still survive. In Britain these rocks are poorly represented, but in Switzerland a single mass of conglomerate belonging to them is 6,000 feet thick. Beds succeed with more than 50 per cent. of their fossils still surviving; a series poorly seen in the British islands, but showing a thickness of 2,000 feet in some of their single members, in Italy. The newest formations are now at length reached, in which 90 per cent. of the fossils still exist. Sands, clays, and drifts, compose these beds, which reach to the surface and end the wondrous story of the earth.¹

It must be remembered that none of the long series of rocks thus enumerated have been formed over more than isolated portions of the earth's surface at a time. The crust has been, in fact, in a constant upheaval or depression in its different parts—the ocean of one age becoming the dry land of another; and each successive formation

¹ Hugh Miller notes (*Test. of the Rocks*, p. 14) that the order of succession of animal life in the rocks is exactly that of Cuvier. Thus:—

Geological arrangement—	Radiata, Articulata, Mollusca, Fish, Reptiles, Birds, Mammals, Man.
Cuvier's	Radiata, Articulata, Mollusca, Fish, Reptiles, Birds, Mammals, Man.

is only the wreck of others of an earlier date. The slowness of this process is self-evident from the very structure of the rocks, whether composed of the sand of earlier deposits, gently sinking to the bottom of the ocean; of chalk slowly accumulated in infinitesimal particles, perhaps in great part from the remains of shells after their occupants had died, or of the mountain masses of limestone, chemically separated, in unperceived advances, from the ocean or terrestrial waters. How long would it take to wear away the hills, and spread them out on the floor of the ocean, in the shape of gneiss, or slate, or sandstone? And when thus spread out, how long would it require to harden them into rock, and after wearing them away by ocean currents, to lift them, during a slow upheaval, often to thousands of feet above the sea, there to be still further worn down, by the rains and the elements, into hills and valleys?

But the fossils which the rocks contain are themselves an indisputable chronology. Beginning, so far as we know, with marine polypi and worms, or perhaps with coralloids, life has never since, through uncipherable ages, been wanting on our planet. As the miles of deposits were slowly thrown down on the floor of the ancient deep, film by film, the ever-deepening ooze swarmed with busy existence. Whole beds of rock, with an aggregate thickness of hundreds, if not thousands, of feet, are made up of shells, which witness by their perfect preservation how calmly the lives of their owners successively passed away. The polishing stone from Bohemia, which we know as Tripoli, is only an accumulation of the flinty coverings of organisms known as diatoms, so minute that no less than 41,000,000,000 of them go to make up a single cubic inch of stone,¹ and there

¹ Nicholson's *Manual*, vol. i. p. 23.

are similar deposits of great extent, and thirty feet in thickness, in Virginia, where the bed is known as the "Infusorial Earth."¹ The "Greensands" of the Chalk and other periods, in the same way, are found to consist in great part of the casts of minute shells from which the lime has been dissolved, a phenomenon which is being even now repeated in various parts at the bottom of existing oceans—each grain being the *cast* of a single shell.² It seems very probable, moreover, that some of the great clayey accumulations of past geological formations may be really the remains of minute shells. Many enormously thick beds of limestone, extending over vast spaces, are, also, simply the wreck of countless millions of similar humble forms of life. Our chalk is an example, and so is a similar deposit still being formed over large areas of the Atlantic and Pacific, at great depths, almost wholly from the debris of minute shells. Whole limestone ranges in Russia, America, and Britain, owe their origin to no more dignified a source. They are built up of the shells of Foraminifera. The petroleum so largely obtained in North America has not improbably an animal origin, and the "bituminous schists" of Caithness are impregnated with oily matter, apparently derived from the decomposition of masses of fish in them, through long periods.³ The Nummulite⁴ limestone of the Tertiary period attains a thickness of many thousand feet, and extends from the Alps to the Carpathians, while it plays a great part in the formation of mountains and hills in Asia Minor, Persia, India and Africa. Yet it is the creation of innumerable disk or money-like shells, mostly very small.

Nor is the record of dim and almost endless ages in the vegetation which the rocks embosom less striking.

¹ Nicholson's *Manual*, vol. ii. p. 430. ² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 27. ⁴ From Nummus, *money*, Latin.

How long, for example, let it again be asked, would it require to grow the amazing harvest of stem and leaf represented by the coal-fields met with in every part of the world—offering fuel in quantities so vast as to be inexhaustible for many ages to come, were the populations of every country in which they occur to use them? ^(a) Or, how long, again, would it need for the “denudations,” or washing and wearing away of immense thicknesses of rock, by whatever agencies, which we see repeated at every step in the history of the earth? A single case may bring this vividly to the mind. The appearance of massive caps of Old Red Sandstone on the tops of the highest hills of Sutherland, and the occurrence of similar isolated patches at remotely separated points over a wide range of country, irresistibly point to the conclusion that these spots and fragments were at one time parts of a vast sheet of stone which lay uniformly over the entire region, from Ben Lomond to Caithness, covering the whole of the highlands of Scotland. Everywhere, the islets, and peaks, and spots, of sandstone, show marks of vast denudation. They form an insulated patch in the northern valley of the Spey; they rise at Lochness in an immense mass of conglomerate, to the height of about three thousand feet above the sea-level, and on the north-west coast of Ross-shire they form three immense insulated hills at least as high. These are well-nigh all that remain of a sheet of rocks of this vast depth, once overlying all this far-stretching tract. “I entertain little doubt,” says Hugh Miller, “that when this loftier portion of Scotland, including the entire highlands, first presented its broad back over the waves, the entire surface consisted exclusively, from one extremity to the other, of a continuous tract of Old Red Sandstone, though, ere the land finally emerged, the ocean currents of ages

had swept away all, except in the lower and last raised borders, and in the detached localities where it yet remains.”¹ But what period can we imagine as sufficiently long for ocean waves to wear away and carry again into the depths, a vast bed of rock stretching over a whole country to the depth of three thousand feet! If anything can help us to realize that a thousand years are with the great God as one day is to us, it is a fact like this.

That, in the main, the causes in operation around us in nature to-day, have been those prevailing in the past, seems beyond dispute. The formation of the eyes, and the structure of the teeth, and of the skeletons of fossil mollusks, fish, reptiles, birds, and quadrupeds, show a uniformity of plan in all the works of the Almighty from the beginning, while the marks of raindrops on what was once the soft sea-beach, and the structure of trees and plants, likewise prove that nature was always the same. Yet it may be readily granted that we cannot justly apply the experience of the present to the earlier periods of our earth, since the conditions were so utterly different. A world cooling from incandescence, and an atmosphere charged with dense vapour, slowly condensing into oceans, are elements in geological calculations which make existing phenomena an unsafe rule for the distant past, if pressed too far.² Yet with every abatement, who will say in how far back an eternity God laid the foundations of the earth? It is well by turning our thoughts at times to such revelations, to realize in some measure the exceeding greatness and majesty of Him with whom we have to do. To exalt God is to learn humility.

With these primeval ages, however extended, the narrative of creation in Genesis comes in no degree into

¹ *Old Red Sandstone*, p. 49.

² This is candidly admitted by Professor Green. *Geology*, p 522.

conflict, for there is no limit set to that "beginning," in which the heavens and the earth were called into being.

With the period at which man was created it is different. The chronology of Scripture, thence, till it falls into that of profane history, has always been a difficult and much disputed question. That of the Hebrew text gives a period of 2,021 years from the creation to the journey of Abraham to Canaan; the Samaritan Pentateuch, 2,322 years; and the Greek Version, 3,507.¹

The whole subject of numbers and dates in connection with the Old Testament is, in fact, a difficult one, partly from the fact that the sacred writers speak of descendants of a given progenitor as his sons, in accordance with Eastern custom, and partly, perhaps, from the use of letters for figures in the early manuscripts.² The Jews did this even after the exile, and it is not improbable that their forefathers did the same, like the Greeks, who borrowed their alphabet from the Phenicians,—a people related to the Hebrews,—and used letters for figures from the earliest times. The mistake by copyists, of letters resembling each other, while of very different numerical value, accounts for many difficulties. It would be easy, for instance, to exchange א (3) for ז (7), or י (80) for כ (20), or מ (40) with ס (60), or ה (5) with ת (400), or נ (1) with ק (1000). The contractions and cramped writing of existing manuscripts, indeed, often, make their correct decipherment difficult even now, and increase the liability to mistakes in copying. But how great must have been the risk of error on such minute points in the countless transcriptions of thousands of years, especially if we

¹ The Rabbinical year now in use among the Jews gives a fourth estimate; for 1880 is by it the year of the world 5640.

² Eichhorn's *Einleitung*, i. § 90. Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, art. *Zahlen*. Gesenius, *Heb. Grammar*, 20th ed. § 5.

remember that two small dots above the first nine letters raised them from units to thousands ?

Under these circumstances it is not wonderful that chronologists have produced very different reckonings in every age. In the French book, "*L'Art de Verifier les Dates*," no fewer than 108 opinions are given respecting the period from Adam to Christ, varying more than 2,000 years in their extremes. Des Vignolles says, indeed,¹ that he had collected 200, the highest of which reckoned the same period at 6,984 years, while in the lowest it was put at 3,483. The chronology followed in our English Bibles is that of Archbishop Usher,² according to which the world is now 5884 years old, but it is needless to say that the worthy Irishman would have been the last to have claimed inspiration for his estimates. One thing in their favour, however, is that Ideler, the great German scholar, accepted them with an addition of only two years up to the birth of Christ.

Various systems have at different times had great celebrity. Thus, Panodorus, an Alexandrian monk who lived about A.D. 412, fixed the year of Christ's birth as the 5493rd from the creation of the world,³ and this reckoning was long used in the Church for the festivals of the ecclesiastical year. Two other calculations are still in use among single Christian nations. That of Anianus, an Egyptian monk, a contemporary of Panodorus, who sets Christ's birth in the year of the world 5501, is still employed by the Abyssinians. The Greek Christian races, with the exception of the Russians, on the other hand, use

¹ In the preface to his *Chronologie de l'Histoire Sainte*, quoted by Ideler.

² 1580-1656. Usher was Archbishop of Armagh.

³ Ideler, *Handbuch der Chronologie*, vol. ii. p. 447. Wieseler, *art. Aere*, Herzog, *Real-Encyclopädie*, vol. i. p. 153.

the Constantinopolitan system, according to which the year begins on the 1st September, and Christ's birth is put in the year 5509. Julius Africanus calculated the year 5500; Eusebius, the Venerable Bede, and the Romish Martyrology, the year 5199; Scaliger and Calvisius the year 3950, and Kepler and Petavius, the year 3984, as that of the nativity. These dates, varying and arbitrary as they seem, have been, among others, the materials of which Church historians and chronologists, not only of the earlier ages, but even since the Reformation have constantly made use.¹

To show at a glance the different ideas of the period assigned by Genesis as that of the creation of man, by these and other calculations, famous in their day, and in some cases in wide use even at present, it may be interesting to note the following table.

	From Creation to 1880
Zunz (Hebrew reckoning).	. . 5868
Septuagint (Perowne)	. 7241 or 7291
Rabbinical . . . . .	. . 5640
Usher . . . . .	. . 5884
Panodorus . . . . .	. . 7373
Anianus . . . . .	. . 7381 ²
Constantinopolitan . . . . .	. . 7389
Eusebius . . . . .	. . 7079
Scaliger . . . . .	. . 5830
Dionysius (from whom we take our	
Christian era) . . . . .	. . 7374
Maximus . . . . .	. . 7381
Syncellus and Theophanes . . . . .	. . 7381
Julius Africanus. . . . .	. . 7381
Hales. . . . .	. . 7291
Jackson . . . . .	. . 7306

¹ The whole question of these eras of the world will be found treated with great learning in *Ideler*, vol. ii. pp. 444-470.

² *Wieseler*: *Ideler* says, 7372.

It is thus clear that it has been at all times an open question among the most orthodox theologians, whether Scripture assigned the creation of man to a nearer or remoter date.¹ Of the calculations above given, nine fix it at over 7,000 years ago, and four at from 5,600 to 5,890. There can be no ground for dogmatizing where doctors differ so strikingly, for he would be a bold man who would impugn the soundness of the worthies who offer even the highest computations quoted. Others might indeed have been added of hardly less weight, for it is not to be forgotten that two hundred different calculations, at least, exist, varying, to the present date, from 8863 years to 5362.

It is worthy of notice, moreover, that even the separate parts of Biblical calculations are differently computed by different authorities. Thus, to instance the case of the Septuagint alone, Dean Perowne² differs 18 and 98 years, respectively, from Bunsen, in his reckoning of the interval from the Creation to Abraham leaving Haran, while as to the numbers through the rest of the Old Testament, either in the Hebrew or the Greek, each investigator adopts his own method of analysis, and draws his own conclusions. The progress of Assyrian studies will perhaps enable future scholars to solve the difficulties which

¹ The chronology of Berosus has been thought to ascribe a length of 43,000 years to each of the ten Babylonian kings, from the *sare* being reckoned at 3,600 years. But a passage in Suidas shows that this was the astronomical *sare* and that there was another of only 18 months, used for civil purposes. According to this, the length of the ten reigns is 2,221 years, or 21 years less than the period given in the Septuagint as having elapsed between Creation and the Deluge. See Vigouroux, *La Bible et les Découvertes Modernes*, vol. i. p. 214. See also Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire* (Paris, 1880), p. 279.

² *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. Chronology.

have hitherto perplexed so many, by furnishing fixed periods from which to start and by which to check their results; but till this is the case, Biblical chronology will be by no means a subject on which all are united. Meanwhile it is well to remember that "the chronology given on the margin of our bibles is of no authority and of great uncertainty."¹

¹ The Rev. Josiah Miller, M.A. *Transactions of Society of Bib. Archæol.*, vol. iv. p. 315.

(a) Experiments have shown that a seam of coal one yard in thickness must have required for its origin a mass of vegetable matter about $8\frac{3}{4}$ yards in thickness. To produce a bed of coal 10 yards thick, such as occurs in England, the peaty mass must have attained, before the vegetable growth ceased and the superincumbent layer of earthy matter was spread upon it, a thickness of about 87 yards,





CHAPTER VII.

ADAM AND EVE.

THE few verses in which Scripture speaks of our first parents leave so much untold, that a natural curiosity has, in all ages, wearied itself by filling up the outline as fancy prompted. The name Adam, which is applied to both the man and the woman, seems to imply that they were of a reddish colour rather than white, like ourselves; but even this is doubtful, for the allusion may be simply to the fact of their creation from the dust of the ground;—the redness referring simply to that of the general colour of soil, as we often speak of the brown or red furrows of the plough.¹

Adam can hardly be called a distinctive name given to our first parent individually. It is rather a title of honour given him as the progenitor of the race, for it is constantly used in the Bible, of mankind at large, as Man. While, however, no name but that of The Man has come down to us as that of our great father, the name of Eve, borne by the mother of us all, was most fitly given, meaning, as it does, simply, Life. It is characteristic of the earnest and grave view of things peculiar to the Hebrews, that the first man bears a name reminding us all of our lowliness and mortality, rather than alluding to our superiority

¹ Mühlau and Volck. *Heb. Handwörterbuch*, p. 13.

to other creatures. In our own language the word man means "the thinking being;"¹ in the Greek, *anthrōpos* means "the upward looking one," or, according to modern philologists, "the being of the noble countenance;" while the Latin "*homo*," long thought to be derived from "*humus*," "the ground," is now held to mean the "speaking one." The Hebrew is contented to think of our race as "him who sprang from the dust."²

The speculations and fancies in which many have indulged respecting our first parents, have been too often as fanciful as they are idle. Thus the Rabbis tell us that his height was so great he could see from one end of the world to the other, and that, when he lay down, his head and his feet were so far apart that it would have taken five hundred years to walk from the one to the other. They add, however, that when he sinned, God "laid His hand upon him,"³ and reduced him to the more moderate stature of a hundred and fifty feet. This, indeed, was a signal mercy, for till then his heel had eclipsed the sun, so that the creatures, and even the angels, mistook him for God, and would have worshipped him had not he checked them.

Some, however, maintain that even after he had sinned,

¹ From Sanscrit *mna*, "to think." It is also the same in modern Tahitian.

² The Phenician Cosmogony speaks of the first man, "Adam Qadmun," as created from the earth. So do Libyan traditions. In Egypt he was thought to have been made of the mud of the Nile. Even in Peru and North America the Indians held the same opinion of our being at first made from the dust. The ancient Chaldeans called the first man "him whom the earth produced." So widely spread have been the echoes of the Bible narrative. Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, pp. 39-41.

³ Ps. cxxxix. 5. Perhaps these exaggerations had a metaphorical meaning. See *Sagen der Ebräer* (Hurwitz), p. xvii.

he was so gigantic that, having to cross the ocean after being driven from Paradise, he waded safely to land, like Orion or Polyphemus in Virgil, his shoulders or even half his body above the flood.¹

His physical beauty is the subject of wild inventions. God, it is said, wishing to create him, clothed Himself in a perfect human body, that He might have a pattern from which to make him literally in His own image. Indeed, not only the Rabbis, but Christian writers have played with this fancy, asserting that it was the Word, the Second Person in the Trinity, who thus assumed a human form, and that the body thus taken was that seen by St. Peter on Tabor at the transfiguration, and by Moses on Mount Sinai.

Even the dust of which our first parent was made has engaged the speculations of many. It was gathered, say the Rabbis, from every part of the world: that of the body from Babel, that for the head from Palestine, and that for the limbs from all other countries.² Many Rabbis have even fancied that Adam and Eve were originally created with one body between them, the two heads turned back to back, Eve being afterwards separated, and presented to Adam as his wife.³

As to knowledge, our first parent has been supposed

¹ Virgil, *Æn.*, x. 763; iii. 655.

² Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, art. Adam.

³ *Ibid.* Lenormant quotes a number of ancient traditions which illustrate in various fanciful ways the Bible statement of the derivation of man and woman from one original. He himself thinks that the Hebrew text means that Eve was formed at Adam's side, not from it. It is at least striking that Jewish and, one may say, universal tradition favours this idea. *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, pp. 51-55. Brentano's *Bible*, i. 16. Baring Gould's curious book, *Legends of Old Test. Characters*, has many additional fancies in the same strain.

by such dreamers to have excelled all men since. It was a favourite mode of stating this, among Christian writers before the Reformation, to say, that the great master Aristotle was almost as learned as Adam. But the Rabbis have gone further; for, not content with comparing him with Moses and Solomon, to whom they ascribed more than human attainments, they maintain that he knew more than the angels. These glorious beings, they tell us, having shown a disposition to look down on the new human creature when he was first made, God told them that he was of higher intelligence than they. To prove this, having summoned all the lower animals, He asked the angels to give them appropriate names, a task they owned to be beyond their powers. Adam, however, on being invited to undertake it, at once did so, and even gave to God the name Jehovah. This vast knowledge and intellect is cleverly made by the later Rabbis the explanation of the saying of their predecessors, that Adam's stature was so enormous. It was meant, they say, of his intellectual greatness.

This vast mental equipment was derived, we are told, from a book sent down from heaven, containing six hundred and seventy writings, which put the one thousand five hundred keys of knowledge, kept from the angels, into Adam's hands. But when he sinned, this book flew up to heaven, and poor Adam, beating his brow and weeping sore, rushed into the river Gihon up to his neck, coming out a rusty red!

His stay in Paradise is spoken of as only a single day. In the first hour, the dust of which he was formed was brought together; in the second, it was made into a shapeless mass; in the third, his limbs were stretched out; in the fourth, his soul was put in him; in the fifth he stood on his feet; in the sixth, he gave all things and

creatures their names ; in the seventh, Eve was created ; in the eighth, Cain and a sister were born ; in the ninth, Adam was told not to eat the forbidden fruit ; in the tenth, he sinned ; in the eleventh, he was pardoned ; and in the twelfth, he was driven out of Paradise.¹

St. Jerome supposed that our first parent was buried at Hebron ; but this did not please the fancy of the day, which clung to the earlier idea that he was laid to rest on Mount Calvary. This was, indeed, the view of most of the Fathers. "Here," says Tertullian, "we maintain the first man was buried ; here Christ suffered ; here He moistened the earth with His holy blood ; that the dust of Adam, mingled with the blood of Christ, might be washed pure by the virtues of the dropping stream."²

It was early urged, as a difficulty in receiving this beautiful legend, that the waters of the Flood must have obliterated all traces of our great forefather's grave. But invention was fertile. Already in the fourth century the teacher of St. Ephrem explained to that saint at Edessa, that at the time of the Deluge Noah lived in Syria ; that he planted in the plains of Sodom the cedars of which the ark was to be built ; that he carried with him in the ark the bones of Adam ; and that when the flood subsided he divided them among his three sons, giving the skull to Shem, whose descendants, having received Judea as their inheritance, buried the sacred relic on Calvary, where the tomb had formerly been.³

Some of the most eminent of the Fathers held that Adam was one of the first raised from the dead with our Lord ; and the Rabbis have a touching legend that he would have died of sorrow after his sin had not God sent an angel to console him.

¹ Eisenmenger's *Judenthum Entdecktes*, vol. i. p. 635.

² *Carm. cont. Marcion.*, c. 4.

³ *Cornelius a Lapide, In Genesin*, c. ii. v. 9.

Cornelius a Lapide adds the strange invention, that Seth, at the command of an angel, put a seed of the forbidden tree into the mouth of Adam at his burial, and that a tree grew from it which afterwards furnished the wood of our Saviour's cross; so that the very tree which had led to the Fall became the instrument of our redemption. The Jews, however, have a legend from which this is evidently borrowed; that the angels bore to Adam, in the desert, a branch of the tree of life which Seth forthwith planted. This grew to a lordly size, and in after ages supplied the rod of Moses, the branch which sweetened the bitter waters of Marah, and the pole on which the brazen serpent was raised.

The question must often rise, what was the religious belief of our first parents? and on this subject Jewish writers, whose study of the ancient Scriptures has been more intense than that of any others, are, perhaps, best entitled to speak. According to Dr. Beer, a learned German Rabbi, the first ten chapters of Genesis, when read without prejudice and with eyes open to the truth, supply the answer, which is summed up in the following particulars :—

Adam, he thinks, must have held : 1. That God alone created the universe; that He existed, of necessity, before creation, and must exist for ever without change, which would imply that He is Immaterial and Eternal.

2. That harmony prevails throughout creation, each part fitting like the wheels of a watch into the whole design, and working with every other, to bring about the one great end, of universal perfection, happiness, and peace. Hence, Adam must have realized that the great Master of the Whole was One, Only, and Allwise.

3. That this Great Being made the world from nothing; that the existence of all creatures depends

absolutely on His will; that He interrupts the course of nature, that is, works miracles, when He thinks fit, and that He is, therefore, Supreme and Almighty.

4. That all that has been or is owes its first source to Him, and has been and is upheld directly by Him—that is, He is Omnipresent.

5. That He created man, as to his soul, in His own image: that is, spiritual, free, and immortal. Hence He must love virtue and hate vice, or in other words, He must be a Holy God.

6. That the lot of man is often felt to correspond with his conduct, thus showing the Righteousness of God. But, the fact that this is not always realized here, is an absolute proof that our conduct and our lot will be brought, hereafter, to correspond. Hence Adam must have believed in a Future State.

7. That God watches, with an all-embracing Providence, over all things; especially over man at large, and each individual in particular, and thus must be All Good.

8. That man is weak, and wrought upon by impulses from within and temptations from without. That when he sins God pardons him, on his seeing and repenting of his faults. Thus Adam must have believed in the Tender Pity and Mercy of the Heavenly Father.

9. That God demands, not on His own account, for He is high above all wants, but for the good of man himself, our homage and obedience to His Sovereign will, not only in the most secret thoughts, but also outwardly; and that He has hence given us Commands and Prohibitions—some of abiding force, others for particular circumstance and times.”¹

The Christian naturally adds to this simple creed a

¹ Beer: *Geschichte, Lehren, und Meinungen der Juden* (1820), vol. i. pp. 12 ff.

trust in the mysterious promise of a future Deliverer—the Seed of the Woman, who should bruise the head of the serpent, and undo the ruin of the Fall. It may have been that the wondrous grace thus foreshadowed was perceived only very imperfectly; but on the other hand, the same heavenly pity that gave the consolation perhaps revealed its Divine completeness. It is impossible, indeed, to conjecture how much may have been disclosed to one who stood in such unique relations to his Maker.

It might have been expected that we should find some account of the creation of Man in the Assyrian legends, but unfortunately those which seem to refer to it are sadly mutilated. Mr. George Smith believed that he could recognise in them a discourse of God to the first man and the first woman on their duties, and exhortations to innocence and purity, but the sense is difficult to make sure. The name of the man, strange to say, is Admu, or Adamu, the Assyrian form of the Hebrew Adam;¹ which Sir Henry Rawlinson regards as designating the “brown race” in opposition to Sarku “the clear or fair.” In the Egyptian records the god Chnumis makes man of clay, on a potter’s wheel.² Other fancies, however, made the four races of men, exclusive of the negro, spring from the tears of Horus, and the work of the goddess Sekhet,—a personification of the eye of Horus, or the sun. But still other inventions ascribe man as sprung from the eye, and the gods from the mouth of that deity.³

The story of our First Parents has furnished a theme for poets from the earliest ages. Victor, a rhetorician of Marseilles, so long ago as the middle of the fifth century,

¹ Delitzsch, *Chald. Gen.*, p. 304. Lenormant, *Origines*, p. 47.

² Chabas: *Études*, p. 87.

³ *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.* vol. iv. p. 45. Vigouroux: *La Bible* ■
Les Découvertes Modernes, vol. i. p. 188.

composed a metrical paraphrase on Genesis, one passage of which, relating to the Fall, is curious. Adam and Eve, having sinned, and having been driven from Paradise, are humbly praying, when, suddenly, the hated serpent is seen gliding past. The ruined pair start at the sight, indignant at the presence of the cause of all their misery. Eve is the first to speak. Adam, if the sight of the author of their sorrows moves him, should, she thinks, snatch one of the stones, which lie thick around, and destroy the source of their own ruin. Nor is he unwilling. He would fain let that which had brought death on them know how sad a thing it is to die, and follows it with a shower of stones; Eve, also, hurling as many as she can, while it glides off. But one stone, sharp edged, strikes on a flinty rock and a spark leaps forth, and catches in the dry leaves around. Presently it leaps from leaves to shrubs, and, ere long, the whole wood around is in flames.

At such a catastrophe our first parents flee terrified, but, soon, overawed by the terrible spectacle, they stop to gaze on a scene so strange to them. Wondering, they see the thick foliage stript from the now bare slopes, and the grove heaped with embers. The sun is obscured by smoke, but the whole landscape is lighted up by the new brightness. Great globes of fire are carried off from the growing trees by the wind, and the flames eat deep to the roots. There, the heat reaches the rich veins, which presently melt and pour out streams of metal. Gold sparkles and glows in its yellow course; silver flows forth shining like milk, and copper winds along, limpid as water.¹

After a time the wild storm of fire passes and things resume their wonted course, but the chance spark has

C. M. Victoris, *Super Genesin Comment.*, given by Fabricius in his *Corpus Poetarum Ecclesiasticorum*. (1572. Basileæ.)

revealed to man the two great discoveries of fire and of the metals.

But a greater poet than Victor has given us, in our own language, though before it had become our modern English, an imaginative picture of the first days of mankind. Cædmon, an Anglo-Saxon, or rather Englishman, born towards the close of the seventh century, a tenant on the lands of the abbey of Whitby, and a convert to Christianity, in his metrical paraphrase of parts of Holy Scripture, has left us the legacy of a true poet. He sings of the Creation, the War in Heaven, the fall of Satan, and of his counsellings in Hell, as the strong Angel of Presumption or Pride.

The poem is so curious and in many respects so noble, that a brief glance at the leading ideas of the part of it referring to our First Parents, may be of interest. It opens with an ascription of praise to the Almighty, the glorious Lord of Hosts. In the beginning He ruled the heavens. The angels, when created, surrounded Him, bright and full of bliss as their Great Original, because sinless. But after a time their guardian "for pride, sank into error," and "turned away from the love of God." He and those who followed him thought they could divide the heavens against God. Satan proposed to seize a home in the north and make it the lofty seat of a new empire under himself. But God was wroth at his presumption, and having prepared a place of punishment for these false ones, took away their courage and drove them out of heaven.

Their vaunt was quelled; their threat shattered;
 Their grandeur bowed; their beauty corrupted,
 For that they had devised 'gainst God to war.

Peace now, once more, reigned in heaven, but the home of the rebel angels was vacant, and God pondered how

He might create a better race. The earth as yet lay waste.

There had not here, as yet, save cavern shade,
Aught been. The wide abyss stood, deep and dark.

The earth lay like

A dark cloud, lowering in eternal night,
Swart under heaven, both dark and waste.
The ocean, shrouded with eternal night,
Stretched far and wide.

Then went forth the guardian Spirit of Heaven, bright
with the upper glory, and passed over the deep with
utmost speed, and the Creator of angels bade the "holy
light" come forth over its spacious bosom, and was pre-
sently obeyed. The firmament, "the roof of nations,"
He next "hove up from the earth by His own word."

Then came o'er earth, swift journeying,
The third great morn.

Here, unfortunately, there is a break, after which an
account of the creation of woman is given, that of man
being apparently lost.

Adam was fast at rest and softly slept.
He knew not pain and had no suffering,
Nor from his wounds flowed any blood.
But from his side the Lord of angels
Drew forth a jointed bone : he, yet, unwounded ;
And of it formed a goodly woman.

Paradise, the home of the new pair, is thus described :—

It stood good and spiritual, filled with gifts.
Fair washed the general land both running water
And welling brooks. No clouds, as yet,
Over the ample ground bore rains,
Lowering with winds.
Yet with all fruits earth stood adorned.

The poet now returns to the rebellion of Satan, and passes on to his plot against man. Glorious as "the light of stars," "he rebelled—sought speech of hate and words of pride, nor would serve God." Summoning his hosts, he thus addressed them :—

"Wherefore shall I toil?

No need have I of master. I can work
 With my own hands great marvels, and have power
 'To build a throne more worthy of a god,
 Higher in heaven. Why shall I, for His smile,
 Serve Him and bow me thus in vassalage?
 I may be God as He.
 Stand by me, strong supporters, firm in strife.
 Hard-mooded heroes, famous warriors,
 Have chosen me for Chief: one may take thought
 With such, for counsel, and, with such, secure
 Large following. My friends in earnest they,
 Faithful in all the shaping of their minds;
 I am their master, and may rule this realm.

Then comes the fall from heaven.

The fiend, with all his host, fell, then,
 Long as three days and nights, from heaven to hell.

There each of all the fiends, each night—
 A night immeasurably long—have a renewal
 Of their fierce penal fires: then, before dawn,
 The Eastern wind brings frost, and bitter cold.

With a striking similarity of treatment to that of Milton, a thousand years later, Satan is now introduced, addressing his followers in hell.

Then spake the haughty king, of angels
 Erst the brightest. He had shone white in heaven
 Till his soul urged, and, most of all, his pride,
 That to the word of God, the Lord of Hosts,
 He should not bend. About his heart, his soul

Tumultuously heaved, hot pains of wrath
 Flamed round him.
 Then spake he: "This narrow place is most unlike
 That other **we** once knew, high in the heavens,
 Which my Lord gave me, though, therein no more
 For the Almighty we hold royalties.
 Yet right He hath not done in striking **us**
 Down to the fiery bottom of hot hell—
 And having stripped us of heaven's kingdom,
 To decree that He will set in it the race of man.
 Worst of my sorrows this, that earth-born Adam
 My strong seat shall possess, and reign in joy,
 While we endure this torment.
 Oh! had I but the freedom of my hands
 Or could I be without for but one season—
 One winter's space—with this host, I——
 But iron binds me round: this coil of chains
 Lies heavy on me. I, now, rule no more—
 Close bonds of hell hold me their prisoner.

* * * *

God hath now devised a world and has made man
 In His own likeness, that by him
 He may repeople heaven with holy spirits,
 To take our place.
 Therefore we must strive zealously
 That we on Adam, if we ever may,
 And on his offspring, all our wrongs repair.
 If we can but corrupt them, God will cast them down
 To hell, and they will be our vassals here.
 Think, all of you, how best you may deceive **them**.
 He who shall that effect, for him
 Shall recompense eternal be the meed,
 So far as in this fire, henceforth,
 Advantages may rise.
 Him will I let sit by myself.

He who is known to us as Satan forthwith volunteers,
 and is girt in full panoply for the mission, by the great
 chief himself.

Wheeling up from thence,
He parted through the doors of hell
Lion-like in air,—in hostile mood
Dashing the fire aside with a fiend's power.

Reaching Eden, "he many speeches knew of grateful words." Making for the two trees of life and death—the former fair and beautiful: the latter "utterly black, dim, and dark," he "cast him into a worm's body, and twining about the tree of death, took of its fruits." Bearing these, he forthwith went in search of Eve, and addressed her as a special messenger from God.

"Tell Adam," said he, "God has sent me as His vassal,
To tell him he should eat this fruit,
To increase his understanding, power, and strength;
To make his body shine like that of angels, and
His form more beauteous. He will need no treasure else
In the whole world."

Adam, however, repels the temptation. God has Himself spoken. He does not know this being. He is not like an angel, and has given no proof that God has really sent him. For himself, he trusts in God, who needs to send no vassal. Disappointed in Adam, the emissary turns again to Eve, and warns her that God will resent this refusal to obey His order, but if she eat, she will grow wise, and learn how to meet the emergency and ward off the punishment. Her eyes will be made so clear that they will see even to the Throne of God, and she will be able to win over Adam from his fatal disobedience to the Divine message, especially if both she and he—the Tempter—press him. If she do this, he will hide from God the slanders Adam has spoken of Him—that "he was not God's angel," that he was "untruthful," and the like.

At last, "her weaker mind began to yield," in spite

of the words of God, and she takes the fruit from the Tempter, who now sends her to Adam. If she get him to eat it, she will save him from the punishment of his having refused to listen to God's messenger. She tastes some before her husband; tells him how sweet it is—how mild—and how her eyes are opened so strangely that she sees "from hence to where God sits, with bliss encircled,"

"I see His angels compass Him with feathery wings,
And hear the gladness of the firmament."

All day she urges Adam, Satan following to excite and urge him, till at last "even in the man the mind began to turn." Beguiled by so much temptation, he comes to think the messenger may be really sent of God, and so

He from his wife took hell and death.—

Then laughed the bitter-purposed messenger.

He had won honour in hell: God's goodness counter-worked:
Filled hell with slaves.

And now "he turns him downwards" to the broad flames—the roofs of hell—where lay his master, bound in fetters.

The light that had charmed Eve fades away as the Tempter leaves. Both she and Adam feel that they have sinned. She, penitent-minded, "wept," and "sometimes to prayer they fell together."

In hell there is great rejoicing. Satan need no longer bear sorrow in his breast, though he lies bound. The children of men must needs lose heaven, and must revert to him, here, in the flames, and not to God. "All our evils are avenged."

Meanwhile, Adam and Eve "spake many words of care together." "Eve had brought about their ruin.

Did she not hear the swart hell raging. The realm of heaven was most unlike that flame. Well may they sorrow for his journey."

"Hunger and thirst now tear me—heat and cold,
How shall I bear them? See, I stand here, bare,
With garment unprotected."

It almost "rues him" that God had created Eve. Her answer is meekness itself.

"Thou mayest reproach me with thy words,
Adam, my loved one, but thou canst not rue
Worse in thy mind than I do in my heart."

Adam's one thought is now to know the will of the All-Powerful One, and what penalty would be imposed. Were he told to wade in the sea, he would do it.

"It were not so fearfully deep, nor yet
Its stream so fearfully great, but I would go
To the abyss, God's will to execute."

He was willing to undergo any atonement, now he had forfeited the favour of his Lord. "But we, thus bare, must now not be together." They both depart, and "sorrowing went, into the greenwood," sitting apart, to await the mandates of heaven's King. Then their bodies they bedecked with leaves, and now join in prayer. "Every morn" they besought the Lord, not to forget them, and that He would show them how they should henceforth live.

Then came, walking, the Lord Almighty,
After midday, in Paradise.

Adam and Eve, "sad-minded," under the tree-shade, "of happiness bereft," retire, and hide themselves in a cavern, but the voice of God calls them. Adam owns his guilt. A criminal, his sin is painful to him, and he

dare not come before the Lord—"he is all naked." The words of Scripture are then paraphrased, and in the end Adam is told,

"Thou shalt another country seek—a dwelling place
Less joyous far—naked and poor—of Eden's bliss bereft.
To thee a parting is decreed of body and soul.
Thou shalt bear a sweaty countenance
While here thou livest, till, at last,
With thee, at heart, shall grapple fell disease."

But while they were driven from Paradise

Yet continued still the roof of holy stars,
And all earth's riches God them amply gave.

This is a brief abstract of the first section of a poem remarkable not only for its force of invention, but as among the earliest creations of English poetry.

Many poets, besides, have in different ages, made our First Parents their theme, but there are few passages in any which equal in beauty of expression or of fancy that in which James Montgomery, in his "World Before the Flood," imagines their last moments.

The Rabbis have given Adam a place in heaven, at its gate, among the penitent, but it was left to a Christian poet to throw over his memory the soft charm of such an incident as is sketched in the lines that follow. The night is so wild and stormy that to Enoch, who speaks, it seemed as if "the world itself would perish with our Sire." The Patriarch tells how, in his last moments, Adam

Closed his eyelids with a tranquil smile,
And seemed to rest in silent prayer awhile:
Around his couch with filial awe we kneeled,
When suddenly a light from heaven revealed
A SPIRIT, that stood within the unopened door;—
The sword of God in His right hand He bore;

His countenance was lightning, and His vest
Like snow at sunrise on the mountain's crest;
Yet so benignly beautiful His form,
His presence stilled the fury of the storm;
At once the winds retire, the waters cease;
His look was love, His salutation, Peace!

Our Mother first beheld Him, sore amazed,
But terror grew to transport as she gazed:
—'Tis He, the Prince of Seraphim, who drove
Our banished feet from Eden's happy grove;
"Adam, my life, my spouse, awake!" she cried,
"Return to Paradise, behold thy Guide,—
Oh, let me follow in this dear embrace!"—
She sank, and on his bosom hid her face.
Adam looked up: his visage changed its hue,
Transformed into an angel's at the view;
"I come," he cried, "with faith's full triumph fired,"
And in a sigh of ecstasy expired.¹

To make the conception perfect it needed only the additional touch, which is added, that Eve dies on her husband's breast, and the two thus enter the heavenly Paradise together.

¹ James Montgomery's *World Before the Flood*, Cant. 4.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY OF EDEN.

NO subject has been more earnestly or more largely discussed than the locality intended by Moses in his account of the residence of our first parents. Eden—"the delightful place"—has been sought not only in every part of the world, but even outside it, for from the second to the tenth century, not a few of the Fathers, and after them others, held that it was the same as the Paradise of which the New Testament speaks, and lay in secret remoteness, half on the earth and half in heaven.

These fond dreamers could not think of any spot of the known earth, now so corrupt, as fit for the abode of primal innocence, and being fettered by no geographical difficulties, sought it in the mysterious spaces of the great Western Ocean. Far in the depths of that vast unknown sea, it was fancied, lay a country in which man had dwelt at first, but which he had left, for the lands on this side of the great waters, after the Flood. In that happy region rose a mountain, in three giant steps, high into the heavens; so high, indeed, that the waters of the Flood, at their full, washed only its base, when all other mountains were sunk beneath them. All kinds of wondrous plants, metals, and precious stones combined to enrich it, but its greatest glory was in its river, the waters of which lost their

heavenly taste only when they had reached the surface of our earth. A single stream flowed from under the throne of God into its gardens,—the choicest of which lay on the highest part of the mountain, towards the east,—and there divided itself into four, which, after watering the whole mountain, disappeared into the ground and flowed beneath hell, the ocean, and the earth, to reappear as the Euphrates and Tigris in Armenia, and as the Nile in Ethiopia. Others fancied that the three great rivers thus welling up from the subterranean waters of Paradise were the Euphrates, the Indus, and the European Danube. The Indus, however, was believed to be only the Nile, for it was supposed that it flowed round the Persian Gulf, and northwards through Ethiopia as the great Egyptian river.¹ Some, for the Danube substituted the Ganges, and others, in the end, came to think that, after all, Eden must be in the East, but that it lay there shut in behind terrible mountains which no mortal foot had ever crossed.

In the later Jewish times and early ages of Christianity, a similarly unrestricted play had been left to invention. It was only needed to put Eden in the farthest north or east, and no one could disprove it. The writer of the Book of Enoch² relates how “as he looked towards the north, over the mountains, he saw seven mountains full of precious balsam and odorous trees, and cinnamon and pepper. From thence I went over the summits of these mountains far towards the east, and passed on still farther over the sea, and came far beyond it. And I came into the garden of righteousness, and saw a many coloured crowd of trees of every kind, for many and great trees flourish there, very noble and lovely, and the tree of wisdom, which gives wisdom to any one who eats of it. It is like the Johannis bread tree; its fruit is like a cluster

¹ Calvin, *On Genesis*.

² Kap. 32.

of grapes, very good ; and the fragrance of the tree spreads far around. And I said, ' Fair is this tree, and how beautiful and ravishing its look ! ' And the holy angel Raphael, who was with me, answered and said to me, ' This is the tree of wisdom of which thy forefathers, thy hoary first parent, and thy aged first mother ate, and found the knowledge of wisdom, and their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and were driven out of the garden.' " Josephus is less extravagant in his locality, but equally singular in his geography. " The garden," says he,¹ " was watered by one river which ran round about the whole earth, and was divided into four streams. And Pison (the first stream), which means ' a multitude,' running into India, falls into the sea, and is called Ganges by the Greeks. The Euphrates and the Tigris² run into the Erythræan Sea, and Gihon runs through Egypt, and means ' what rises in the east,' which the Greeks call the Nile." Fancies as vague prevailed till comparatively modern times, but they necessarily fell into disrepute as intelligence awoke and knowledge increased. Luther believed it impossible ever to discover the true locality. " Paradise, shut at first by the sin of man, has since been so utterly wasted and overwhelmed by the flood that no trace of it remains." Calvin, on the other hand, would on no account grant this, and maintained that the world was the same as was created at first : adding that " Moses, indeed, in his opinion, accommodated his topography to the comprehension of his age."

¹ *Antiq.*, i. 1, 3.

² There has never been any dispute as to these two rivers being meant. Përath (the sweet waters) is simply the old Assyrian name Purat. In old Persian it is Ufratu, "the fair flowing river." Hiddekel is the same word as Hidiglat, a name for the Tigris, in the Assyrian inscriptions. It means "the arrow-swift."

Paradise, the Reformer fancied, must have been between the east and Judæa, and indeed in Southern Mesopotamia, where he fixed it, in a map prefixed to his Commentary.

Luther's opinion, however, became the more popular; for though it was hard to give up attempts to decide the locality of Eden, his idea of changes since brought about on the earth's surface offered a ready escape from any difficulties. It was hard, indeed, to believe that the Euphrates and Tigris, the Indus and the Ganges, or the Indus and the Oxus, or the Ganges and the Nile, had ever sprung from one parent stream, but attempts were made to explain the Gihon and the Pison so as to bring them closer together. They were identified by Reland¹ as the Araxes, which falls into the Caspian, and the Phasis, which flows into the Black Sea; but as this placed Eden on the barren mountains of Armenia, various modifications of his views have since been made. They still, however, influence the investigations of not a few.

It would be wearisome to quote at length the widely contrasted opinions which offer themselves in the long list of writings more or less fully devoted to this subject, for it embraces not fewer than eighty treatises. Palestine, Syria, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Persia, the Delta of the Indus, Cashmere, one of the South Sea Islands, the Canary Islands, St. Gothard in the Alps, and even the shores of the Baltic, have been zealously advocated as the seat of Paradise.

The most recent discussions are as widely opposed as those of former times. Dillmann,² an eminent critic, for example, after defining the meaning of the names Pison and Gihon as "the broad-flowing," and the "breaker-forth," thinks that even names so little distinguishing,

¹ A great Dutch theologian, born 1676, died 1718.

² Art. Eden, Schenkel's *Bib. Lexicon*, vol. ii. p. 44.

leave less difficulty than might be expected in understanding to what they refer. Kusch, he goes on to say, is always, in the Old Testament, the name for the most southern lands and races of the then known earth, whether in the narrower sense of African Ethiopia, or as including the part of Asia to which also that name was given. Havilah is mentioned as a Kushite tribe on the southern coast of the Red Sea, and also as a tribe sprung from Joktan, on the Persian Gulf, and occurs along with Saba and Ophir. Even Judea may be supposed to be meant from the products mentioned.¹ Pison and Gihon can hardly be any other than the Ganges and the Indus. The seat of Eden must therefore, in his opinion, be represented as at the Himalaya Mountains in Northern India, though the vast distance between the Mesopotamian rivers and those of Hindostan make it hard to think how the four could have been fancied as springing from one head. Professors Maspero² and Renan³ tell us very positively that the moderns have succeeded in determining the site more exactly than the ancients. They have placed it in the mountains of Bolor (Belourtagh), not far from the point where that chain joins the Himalaya, on the plateau of Pamir. This would place Eden on the other—northern—side of the stupendous range of the Hindoo Koosh mountains, straight north from Peshawur, and east of Bokhara, on a plateau known as the Roof of the World, from its great elevation.

¹ The bdellium of Havilah is supposed by Rosenmüller (*Handbuch Bib. Alt.*) to mean pearls. Mühlau and Volck, and Fürst, suppose it to have been an odorous resin or gum of a tree growing in Arabia, Media, and India. On the other hand, Lefmann (*Gesch. des Alten Indiens*, p. 1) compares the Hebrew word Bedolah, spelt by him Bedora, with the Sansc. Vadara = the cotton plant.

² *Histoire Ancienne* (1876), p. 133.

³ *Histoire Générale des Langues Sémitiques* (3rd ed.), pp. 476–490.

Ebers,¹ another distinguished critic, finds the Gihon in the Nile, which, he tells us, is still called Keōn by the Copts, and Gihon by the Abyssinians. But he adds that the name was given to many rivers by the dwellers on their banks, to flatter themselves with the belief that they lived in the seat of Paradise. Gihon, he thinks, was, also, the Ganges, which was still supposed to be one with the Nile, in the days of Alexander the Great.² In the same way the Euphrates was imagined by many in the second century after Christ to join the Nile,³ and, even in the sixth century, the monk Cosmas,⁴ the great geographical authority of the Middle Ages, makes the Ganges and the Nile one stream.⁵ The difficulties thus raised are to Ebers so great that he ends by saying, "We entirely agree with Delitzsch, that 'Paradise is lost,' and the four streams are on this account a riddle which cries, 'Where was Paradise?' the question remaining without an answer."

¹ *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, pp. 29 ff.; *Ges. Thes.*, p. 282.

² *Arrian*, vi. 1. "Alexander, seeing crocodiles on the Indus, thought he had found the source of the Nile, fancying that it rose in India, and lost the name of Indus from flowing through the desert."

³ *Pausanias*, ii. v. 2.

⁴ An Alexandrian monk of the 6th century. He visited many countries in Asia and Africa. The science of his day may be judged from his maintaining that the earth was of a long narrow rectangular shape, surrounded by a high wall, and that towards the North Pole were high mountains, round which the sun, planets, and stars revolved. If this was the knowledge of the universe in his time, what must it have been 2,000 years before.

⁵ Homer's idea of the world is seen in the lines, *Iliad*, xxi. 195-197.

The ocean,

From which all the rivers, and all the seas,

And all the streams and springing brooks flow forth.

The ocean was, in fact, supposed to flow round the earth.

Undismayed by so many failures and by so many different theories, Sir Henry Rawlinson has within a few years back advanced a new view, with great confidence in its correctness. He tells us that the "Gan Eden," in which the Hebrews place, "the Garden of Eden," was in reality the national name of the province of Babylon, and that the four rivers watering it are two branches of the Tigris and of the Euphrates, which are often used in the



MAP OF THE WORLD BY COSMAS, "THE MAN WHO SAILED TO INDIA." MIDDLE OF 6TH CENTURY. FROM THE ORIGINAL PRINT IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

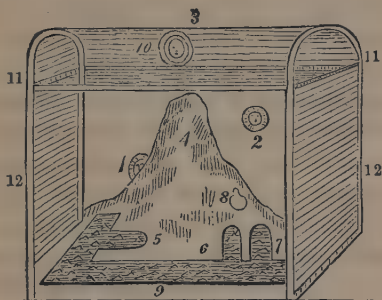
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The great ocean surrounding the whole earth. | 6. The Red Sea. |
| 2. The Caspian Sea. | 7. The Persian Gulf, with the rivers Tigris, Euphrates, and part of the river Gihon. |
| 3. The river Pison. | 8. The river Gihon (joined to the Nile). |
| 4. The four great winds. | 9. The sources of the rivers and ocean. |
| 5. The Mediterranean. | |

inscriptions, to describe the region, when its streams are to be mentioned.¹ Pressel, also, an accomplished scholar, has lately advanced once more, with great confidence, in a long monogram,² the view of Calvin, which has had many other supporters since, that Eden lay in the district

¹ *Journal of Asiatic Soc. (Annual Report, 1869)*, pp. xxiii. xxiv.

² *Paradies*. Herzog, vol. v. xx. pp. 332-377.

on the Persian Gulf, where the Euphrates and Tigris unite to form the stream known as the Schatt el Arab. Calvin fancied the Pison and Gihon to have been the two mouths of this river; but it is a question whether they are both of ancient date. Pressel adopts a modification of this theory,¹ which he urges with remarkable acuteness. The Pison and Gihon, in his opinion, are the two eastern tributaries of the Schatt el Arab, the Karun and the Kertha. To get the "four heads," he supposes the



THE HEAVENS AND EARTH OF COSMAS.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. The setting sun. | 8. The Garden of Eden. |
| 2. The rising sun. | 9. Part of the great ocean which flows round all the world. |
| 3. The arch of the heavens. | 10. The Creator surveying His works. |
| 4. The mountain which receives the rising and setting sun. | 11. The firmament, dividing and supporting the upper waters. |
| 5. The Mediterranean. | 12. The heavens at each side of the earth. |
| 6. The Red Sea. | |
| 7. The Persian Gulf. | |

describer as ascending the Euphrates, and thus meeting, first, these two waters entering it, and then the central channel dividing into the Tigris and Euphrates. Settlers always ascend rivers from the sea, he tells us,

¹ It was first advanced by Rask, in Illgen's *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*, vol. vi. pp. 94 ff.

and those from whom, first Abraham and then Moses derived the tradition, must have done so. The word Pison, he adds, means the Leaper,¹ and this exactly suits the Karun, which rushes step by step from four different mountain levels, and thus may well be called the Cataract Stream. The word Gihon he agrees with Dillmann in translating the Breaker-through, and finds it precisely indicating the characteristics of the Kertha, which "breaks through the mountains and descents of Laristan by wild clefts and cross valleys with a thousand windings." The four regions named in the Mosaic account, Eden, Havilah, Ethiopia or Kusch, and Assyria, are all found in the vicinity of this district. Kusch is identified with the present Khuzistan, which borders the Schatt el Arab, and is watered by both the Karun and the Kertha. He says, with great force, that though the name Cush was doubtless applied in after ages to the regions south of Egypt and to Arabia, the account of Eden must refer to its first application, when the progenitors of the Cushites still lived in their original homes. Havilah,² the Sandland,—that is apparently the Gold-sandland,—he thinks must have been the district afterwards known as Elymais or Susiana, which

¹ Dillmann translates it "The Broad-flowing."

² Gen. x. 29 has the name Havilah as the district of an Arab stock sprung from Joktan. In Gen. xxv. 18, it is said to be the eastern boundary of the Ishmaelites, instead of whom the Amalekites are named in 1 Sam. xv. 7. The *Xαλοταῖοι* of Strabo, on the Persian Gulf, have been thought by some to point to its locality. Niebuhr found a name very like it in these parts. There is another Havilah mentioned (Gen. x. 7; 1 Chron. i. 9) among the sons of Cush, which points to South Arabia or Ethiopia. There is a place known to the ancients as Avalitæ, on the Abyssinian coast, below Bab el Mandeb. The bdellium of Genesis, seems to have been a fragrant gum, but see note p. 110.

is close to the region he favours. Eden, as the name of a country, he supposes to have been Mesopotamia, and from all this, he concludes, that the now swampy lowlands at the mouth of the united Euphrates and Tigris, were, certainly, the site of Paradise.¹ Unfortunately for this hypothesis, Sir Henry Rawlinson tells us² that the delta of the Schatt el Arab advances at the rate of an English mile in sixty-six years, and must have grown in early times at the rate of a mile in half that time, which would imply the addition of from 150 to 200 miles of land to the locality since the days of Adam.

Traditions of a primitive state of innocence reflect in every age and nation the truth of the narrative of Genesis. They date, in fact, from before the separation of mankind into different races, all countries evidently drawing them from a common source.³ Coloured by local surroundings, national history, and heathenism, the story of a happy past, when "men, as yet without any evil passions, passed their lives without reproach and crimes, and therefore without punishments and restraints," has everywhere been cherished by mankind.⁴ The ancient Egyptians looked back on the terrestrial reign of the god Ra, as a time of such purity and happiness, that they were wont to speak of anything especially perfect, as having been unequalled since the days of that god.

¹ Paradise means a place fenced round; and hence, a park, a garden with trees. The pleasure grounds and gardens of the Persian kings were called "Paradises." Xenophon describes one belonging to them as a garden very large and beautiful, having all things which the seasons produce. *Anab.*, iv. 10.

² *Journal of the Geographical Society*, vol. xxvii. p. 186.

³ Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 342. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. i. p. 528. Renan, *Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, p. 457.

⁴ Tac., *Ann.*, iii. 26.

Before the separation of the Aryan and Semitic races, the belief was common to both that the first age of humanity was one of innocence and bliss. The Aryans, indeed, developed this belief, in a way peculiar to them, into a tradition of successive ages of decreasing purity and happiness. Thus, in India, they held that the course of the world, which was to last for 4,320,000 years, was pre-ordained to exhibit—first, the age of perfection; then, that of threefold sacrifice, when all religious duties were faultlessly performed; next, that of doubt and religious decline; and lastly, our own, that of perdition, with which the earth is to come to an end.¹ The Greeks had their successive ages of gold, silver, iron, and brass; and the Persians, also, had the same idea, in a form of their own. The world, with them, is to last 12,000 years, divided into four periods of 3,000 each. Of these, the first was all pure; in the second, evil appears and declares war against good, in a struggle which is to last till the whole drama closes. But in all these conceptions, there is a marked contrast with the narrative of Scripture, for in all, alike, corruption grows by a fell necessity, through mere continuance. Born of the light, the universe grows darker the farther it recedes from it. Evil is not a matter of choice, but a decree of fate. How inferior this to the Scripture teaching!

The trees of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, have been no less widely remembered. The Indian tradition speaks of the tree Kalpānksham, whose fruit gave immortality; among the Persians a similar tree was called Hom; among the Arabs, the Tuba; among the Greeks, the Lotus. On the Assyrian sculptures the tree of life is constantly seen, and its high importance cannot be doubted. It sometimes appears alone, sometimes wor-

¹ *Laws of Menu*, vol. i. pp. 68-86.

shipped by royal figures, at others guarded by winged forms in an attitude of adoration; but it is always incontrovertibly one of the loftiest of religious emblems, for we often see it surmounted by the winged disk, the symbolic image of the Supreme God, with occasionally a human bust above all. Alike on the bas-reliefs of Assyrian palaces, and on both Babylonian and Assyrian cylinders, it recurs with striking constancy.

All the traditions of Paradise, in every country, introduce this mysterious appearance. Those of India speak of four such trees on the four corners of Mount Meru; the ancient Persians have sometimes a single tree springing from the midst of a holy spring in Paradise, and sometimes two, corresponding exactly to those in Eden. The most ancient name of Babylon, in the idiom of the first dwellers in that region, was "The place of the tree of life,"¹ and even on the coffins of enamelled clay, of a date later than Alexander the Great, found at Warka, the ancient Erech, this tree appears as the emblem of immortality.² Strange to say, one picture of it on an ancient Assyrian relic, has been found drawn with sufficient accuracy to enable us to recognise it as the plant known as the Soma tree to the Aryans of India, and the Homa of the ancient Persians, the crushed branches of which yielded a draught offered as a libation to the gods, as the water of immortality.

The Fall in all its details finds an echo in every

¹ Lenormant, *Contemp. Rev.* (Sept. 1879), p. 155.

² Schrader, *Jahrbücher für Protest. Theol.*, vol. i. p. 124. Delitzsch *Chaldäische Genesis*, p. 304. In Egypt the tree of life is seldom seen except on funeral monuments, and it is always planted beside "the water of life." A Divine form, in the midst of the tree is, also, always represented as pouring forth this water of immortality to souls, personified by birds with human heads. *Vigoureux*, vol. i. p. 196.

religion of the world. Yeina, the first man in Aryan tradition, passed his life in a state of bliss, till he committed the sin which weighs on his descendants, and for this he was driven out of Paradise after being a thousand years in it, and was given up to the dominion of the Serpent, who finally brought about his death by horrible torments.¹ In one of the oldest portions of the sacred scriptures of Zoroastrianism, the good god, Ahuramazda, speaks of his having created man perfect, in "the best of dwelling places," and of the evil spirits having formed, out of the river and winter, the murderous serpent, man's destroyer.² A later, but still primitive, variation of this tradition describes man as created holy, and destined to immortal happiness, if he continued pure in thought, word, and deed, and humble in heart. At first he remained true to God, but, later, falsehood ran through his thoughts; for the evil spirit, the serpent, seduced first the woman and then the man to believe that they were indebted for all their blessings, not to God but to him. Having thus lead them astray, the deceiver, who had lied them to their ruin, grew more bold, and presented himself a second time, *bringing them fruits, which they ate, and by eating which they lost all the hundred blessings they had had, save one*, and were wicked and unhappy. And now, having ere long discovered fire, by Divine revelation, they offered the first sacrifice of a sheep, and began to eat flesh, and clothe themselves with the skins of the creatures they killed, and to make garments of their hair.³ The Edda of Snorro Sturleson tells how the immortal Idhunna lived with Bragi, the first of the

¹ F. Lenormant, *Contemp. Rev.* (Sept. 1879), p. 152.

² *Vendidad*, vol. i. pp. 5-8.

³ *Zendavesta*, in Rosenmüller's *Das Alte und Neue Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 13.

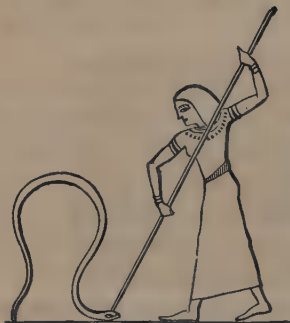
skalds or minstrels, in Asgard, a paradise in the centre of the earth, pure and innocent. The gods had entrusted him with the guardianship of the apples of immortality; but Loki, the deceiver, the author of all evil, seduced her by other apples, which he said he had discovered in the woods. Idhunna followed him to gather them, but she was suddenly carried off by a giant, and there was no more joy in Asgard. The Tibetan legend is no less striking. The first men were, it tells us, perfect like the gods, but they grew corrupt when they ate of the white sugar-sweet Schima tree. Hunger came, and the brightness of their faces vanished. They had had wings before, but these withered away. Men were henceforth chained to the earth, and their lives were shortened.

Even the prediction of the crushing of the head of the serpent has perpetuated itself in the traditions of mankind. Among the Egyptians the serpent Assap fights against the sun and moon, but is pierced through by Horus. The Chaldeo-Assyrians had a great serpent called "the enemy of the gods." Phereclides of Syros borrowed from the Phenicians an account of a great man-serpent hurled into Tartarus, together with his companions, by the god Kronos (El), who triumphed over him at the beginning of things. It was under the form of a great serpent that the evil spirit, in the ancient Persian religion, after having tried to corrupt heaven, leaped upon the earth, where Mithra, god of the pure sky, fought with him while still in this shape. It is under this form, moreover, that he is finally to be conquered and chained for 3000 years, and at the end of the world burned up with molten metals.¹

Nor did such traditions confine themselves to the East.

¹ For the religion of the ancient Persians, see Dr. Justi's *Geschichte des Alten Persiens* passim.

We find traces of them in ancient Roman sculptures. One famous sarcophagus in the museum of the Capitol shows a man and woman, naked, standing at the foot of a tree, from which the man is about to take some fruit, while the demon who has tempted him is standing near. On an ancient Roman bas-relief, again, a huge serpent is seen coiled round the trunk of a tree, beneath which a man and woman, in primitive nakedness, are standing. That the dim perpetuation of the old Bible story was common even to the Canaanites has, moreover, lately



**AN EGYPTIAN GODDESS PIERCING THE
SERPENT'S HEAD.**

From *Wilkinson*, vol. v. plate 42.



**THE INDIAN GOD KRISHNA CRUSH-
ING THE SERPENT'S HEAD.**

From *Coleman's Indian Mythology*, p. 34.

been strikingly shown by a curious painted vase of Phœnician manufacture of the sixth or seventh century B.C., discovered in one of the most ancient sepulchres of Cyprus.¹ It exhibits a leafy tree, from the branches of which hang two large clusters of fruit, while a great serpent is advancing with an undulating motion towards the tree, and rearing itself to seize its fruit. In a Scan-

¹ Lenormant, *Contemp. Rev.* (Sept. 1879), p. 155.

dinavian legend, Thor, the firstborn of the highest God, a mediator between Him and men, fights with death, and in the struggle is thrown on his knees; but he breaks the head of the great serpent with his club, and finally tramples it under foot and slays it, though at the price of his own life.¹ So, in the oldest Hindoo temples, two figures of Krishna are still seen, in one of which he is trampling on the crushed head of the serpent, while in the other the serpent clings round him and bites his heel.²

Assyria, also, has yielded its tribute to these primeval echoes of the Fall. Among the relics brought to



SACRED TREE, WITH A SEATED FIGURE ON EACH SIDE, AND A SERPENT
IN THE BACKGROUND.

From an early Babylonian Cylinder.

England by Layard is an ancient Babylonian cylinder, on which is a design representing, in the centre, a tree with horizontal branches, with two bunches of fruit hanging down, while on each side, respectively, sit a man and a woman; the former with the horns of an ox; the latter with simply a head-dress, but behind her is a serpent, erect. It is impossible in looking at this not to think of the Bible story of the temptation of Adam and Eve, or

¹ *Edda*, Fab. ii. 25, 27, 32.

² Maurice's *History of Hindostan*, vol. ii. p. 290.

to doubt that though, unfortunately, the Chaldean narrative of the Fall has not yet been recovered, it formed part of the traditions of the country, or that the serpent was recognised, in at least one form of the legend, as the agent in the catastrophe. The dragon Tihamat—the personification of the Tehôm of the Hebrews—the abyss of chaos—is, however, also frequently spoken of as the seducer of mankind, as if it were believed in Chaldea as well as with us, that the serpent was simply the instrument of the great spirit of evil.

George Smith discovered, among the ruins of Kouyundjik, the curse pronounced on the offenders after their transgression. His translation is confessedly uncertain; but, such as it is, the following is the principal part of it:—

The Lord of the earth called his name; the Father **Ilu**

In the ranks of the angels pronounces the curse.

The god Hea heard, and his liver grew angry,

Because the man had corrupted his purity.

Thus (spake) Hea: "How can I punish—

(How can I) destroy all my race!"

In the language of the fifty great gods,

By their fifty names he calls them, and he turns himself

From him (man) in wrath.

"Let him be overcome and destroyed at a blow," (said he).

"Let wisdom and science be against him and hurt him.

Let enmity be between father and son. Let robbery abound.

Let them bend their ear to their king, their chief, their ruler.

Let them thus anger the lord of the gods, Merodach.

Let the earth produce, but let not man eat of its bounty.

Let his desires be frustrated; his will unaccomplished.

Let no god take heed when he opens his mouth.

Let his back be hurt and not cured.

Let no god hear the piercing cry of his anguish.

Let his heart faint and his soul be troubled."¹

¹ *Chaldean Genesis*, pp. 84, 85.

This lengthened malediction falls far short of the dignity of the curse pronounced in Genesis, but it is impossible not to feel that it refers to the same crisis in our history as a race.

That the sacred tree of Assyria is sometimes guarded by genii is an additional coincidence with the Bible narrative, which tells us of God's placing cherubim "before" Eden, "and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life." These mysterious beings are often mentioned in Scripture. They covered the mercy seat with their outspread wings; they were represented on the walls of the Temple of Solomon, in the Holy of Holies, and they appear in the vision of Ezekiel. The tradition of their presence in Eden impressed itself deeply on the popular mind in Assyria, reappearing age after age in such forms as the winged bulls with human faces, which guarded the entrances to the palace of Nineveh. "The watchful bull, which protects the strength of my kingdom and the glory of my honour," says Asarhaddon, in an inscription which refers to one of them. Nor is it less striking that they bear the very name of Cherubim, or Kerubi; even the gates which they watched coming in the end to be similarly called. That they were regarded as at least symbols of mysterious higher existences, able to protect and preserve what was put under their care, is evident from their place being sometimes occupied by known divinities, and by the fact that a bas-relief, representing the erection of one, under the direction of King Sennacherib, bears on it, after the divine symbol, the words, "the bull," "the god."¹

The flaming sword of which Moses speaks as in the

¹ Lenormant's *Berosé*, pp. 80, 135. *Les Origines de l'Histoire* pp. 109-117.

hands of the cherubim has often exercised the ingenuity of scholars, but it must, we fear, remain for ever a mystery. Could it be the lightning which we see represented in Assyrian sculptures as held by the god Bin, the deity of the air, in the form of a flame spoken of as “a sword of fire”?¹ An old Accadian fragment, translated by Lenormant, perhaps assists a judgment—a nameless god boasting in it, with high exultation, of possessing a sword formed of seven rays of fire, shooting out into a revolving circle of fifty tongues of flame. A translation of this curious legend has been published, and furnishes matter so interesting that a short extract may be useful.

In my right hand I hold my disk of fire,
 In my left I grasp my disk of slaughter.
 The sun with fifty faces . . . a sun which never turns back—
 The mighty weapon which, like a sword, devours in a circle
 The bodies of my enemies,—
 The weapon that breaks the mountains . . .
 The flaming blade of battle, which wastes the rebellious land,
 The great sword which overthrows the ranks of the valiant.²

Another legend has been discovered, and translated by Mr. Fox Talbot, which no less strikingly illustrates the sword of the cherubim. The subject is the “Fight between Bel and the Dragon.” The god appears armed with his flaming sword.

He raised it in his hand;
 He brandished the lightnings before him.
 A curved scimitar he carried on his body,
 And he made a sword to destroy the dragon,
 Which turned four ways. . . .

¹ Rawlinson's *Great Monarchies*, vol. i. p. 164.

² Lenormant *Les Premières Civilisations*, vol. ii. p. 193. *Les Origines*, n. p. 135.

To the south, the north, the east, and the west
 He made a whirling thunderbolt—with double flames¹
 Impossible to extinguish."

In all, he took with him seven thunderbolts or lightnings.²

Such were the legends of Western Asia, but those of the east and of the central plains were no less striking. Heavenly beings, armed with the lightnings, guard the Soma tree of Indian fable; and on the steppes of Asia, the Tartars, in keeping with their pastoral habits, believe that there is, somewhere, a grass known as the grass of life, which is protected by a supernatural being on horseback.³

Nor are such illustrations of the external facts of the Bible narrative the only echoes of Paradise which lingered among mankind. The existence and origin of evil were a special theme of ancient poets and philosophers. The Greeks especially, among Western nations, delighted to dwell on the subject.

Thus Hesiod, in the 9th or 8th century before Christ, tells us that men at first lived happy, free from toil and sickness, or evils of any kind.

Lo, at first, lived the race of earth-tilling men
 Kept far from suffering or from weary toil,
 And from sad disease which brings death to mankind,
 For trouble makes mortals grow early old.⁴

¹ Forked lightning.—The flaming sword of the Assyrian legends is, in fact, only the Tchakra of Indian mythology—a circular weapon edged with sharp swords, which was made to whirl rapidly, and thrown out before the warrior who used it, and then pulled back to be hurled out again. Lenormant, *Les Origines*, etc., p. 133.

² *Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. pp. 1-21.

³ Weber's *Ind. Stud.*, vol. ii. p. 313.

⁴ *Works and Days*, lines 90-93. The other quotations are lines

Plenty and contentment filled their souls, amidst their easily gained though simple living.

Easily, then, would they do in one day the work
Which now needs a full year, and that often profitless;
Soon then rested the helm of the boat over the hearth,
And brief were the toils of the ox and the load-bearing mule.

But this state did not continue long. Prometheus deceives Jupiter, the father of gods and mortals, and as a punishment on the human race, fire is hidden from them. But Prometheus, whose offence, like that of the sons of Eli at Shiloh, was taking for common use some of the flesh and fat of sacred offerings, dexterously discovers the fire, and takes it away, unknown to the Thunderer, in the hollow of a staff, and gives it to man. Then Jupiter threatens him.

Thou art glad to have snatched away the fire and deceived me;

Look then for woe on thyself and the future generations of men.

I give them with fire a curse, in which all

Shall rejoice in their hearts, embracing the evil I send.

He now sends Pandora, the first woman, formed by Hephaistos, and presented by each of the gods with a gift. Epimetheus, forgetful of the warning of his brother, Prometheus, never to take a gift from Jupiter, takes a casquet he gives, opens the lid, and forthwith all the evils of man's lot fly out.

43-46, 47, 55-58, 101-104. The Bible, it will be noticed, differs in its story of the Fall from all heathen traditions, in leaving absolute moral freedom to man, and with it responsibility and power of restoration; whereas, outside its statements there is nothing but fatal destiny, destructive of all true morality.

The earth around is full of evil, and so is the wide sea.

Diseases as well, by day and also by night,

Approach unbidden and bring evils to mortals.

They come still and softly, for Zeus Kronion has made them dumb.

Only Hope remains behind in the casket; Pandora, at the counsel of Jupiter, having closed the lid before this also flew out. And now the poet closes the pitiful story by the moral.

Thus it is permitted to none to escape Jove's ruling power.

In the Theogony of Hesiod, this relation is expanded and modified, adding the terrible punishment inflicted on Prometheus, and his deliverance, but the moral is the same as in the "Works and Days." "No one can escape the ordinances of Jupiter or circumvent them." Æschylus, in his "Prometheus Bound," gives, in the fifth century before Christ, a later expression of Greek thought on the same themes. Men at first, in his idea, were wretched, living in caves, and ignorant even of the course of the seasons. Prometheus raises them from this degradation, from foolish love to man and bold defiance of the gods. Jupiter is the enemy of our race: he their friend. His theft of fire from heaven is their salvation, for all the arts and comforts of life spring from it; but he has to bear untold sufferings on account of it—sufferings, nevertheless, ultimately removed. How they were so is, however, left to a third tragedy, now unfortunately lost.

The resemblances between these highest expressions of the thought of antiquity, echoing in their own way primitive tradition, show striking similarities in their leading features to the Old Testament narrative. Both paint the original state of man as one of freedom from all suffering, through happy contentment and unbroken peace with

God ; both account for the origin of evil and the consequent loss of man's first estate ; both link its entrance on our world with an act of disobedience towards the Godhead, and ascribe its committal to the agency of woman. The Old Testament says that through eating the forbidden fruit man became like God, in the knowledge of good and evil ; the Greeks that the act which brought sorrow into the world was also the opening of a new and higher era of knowledge : the exchange of a childlike state for a more complete one.

The contrasts, however, are still more striking than the resemblances. Genesis portrays God as the One only self-existent and independent ; the universe as the creation absolutely under His control ; sin as a voluntary transgression of His law, which itself, as a reflection of His nature, is holy, just, and good. The Greek mind sees in Jupiter a being, who while supreme as regards man, is himself controlled by fate : one who acts by tyrannical caprice, wholly dissociated from moral considerations. It sees in the world a self-existent, and therefore partly independent, rival to him, and in sin a misfortune rather than a fault. "The Fall," to the Greek, is a struggle of violence and craft between man and the Godhead, in which the latter conquers, as it were by accident, and, at most, by outward power. In the Old Testament, sin is the unholy opposition of the creature to the Holy Creator ; of the absolutely dependent to the absolutely Independent. Elohim sits throned in unapproachable power, wisdom and holiness ; the law-giver, the judge, the punisher of man—the guilty transgressor, created sufficient to have stood, but free to fall, and choosing of his free will to sin.¹ In

¹ See a fine article by Dr. G. Baur, on *Die Alttestamentliche und die Griechische Vorstellung vom Sündenfalle. Studien und Kritiken* (1848), pp. 321–368.

the Bible, moreover, the spectacle is presented from the first, of the continued rise of man from the ruin of his early sin. In paganism we have the golden age surely darkening into that of iron.

The highest flights of human speculation are represented by the Greek conceptions, but we feel at once how immeasurably they fall below the simple but divine philosophy of Genesis—the legacy of a race to whom abstract speculation was unknown; a race which accepted without question, as final truths, what its prophets and holy men received by inspiration. How comes it, to use the words of J. G. Fichte, who certainly had no undue leaning towards revelation, that “The ancient and venerable record,” in which we find the Hebrew teachings, “taken altogether, contains the profoundest and the loftiest wisdom, and presents those results to which all philosophy must at last return”?¹ What answer can be given except that God Himself is its Author?

Note.—In connection with the words Gen. iii. 18, “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee,” the Rev. Hugh Macmillan strikingly observes—“It is a remarkable circumstance that whenever man cultivates nature, and then abandons her to her own unaided energies, the result is far worse than if he had never attempted to improve her at all. There are no such thorns found in a state of nature as those produced by the ground which man once has tilled, but has now deserted. In the waste clearings amidst the fern brakes of New Zealand, and in the primeval forests of Canada, thorns may now be seen which were unknown before. The nettle and the thistle follow man wherever he goes, and remain as perpetual witnesses of his presence, even though he departs; and around the cold hearthstone of the ruined shieling on the Highland moor, and on the threshold of the crumbling log-hut in the Australian bush, those social plants may be seen

¹ Quoted in Brentano's *Bible*, vol. i. p. 16. (Frankfurt, 1820-1833.)

growing, forming a singular contrast to the vegetation around them."

Another extract will serve as a note to page 64:—"All the eras of the earth's history, previous to the Upper Miocene, were destitute of perfumes. An odoriferous flora, that of the labiates, is met with only in the periods immediately before man. But so widely spread, and so numerous is this order of plants, that in South Europe they form one-nineteenth of the flora, and in the tropics one-twentieth: and even on the chill plains of Lapland, out of every thirty-five plants one is a sweet-smelling labiate."—*Macmillan's Ministry of Nature*, p. 25.





CHAPTER IX.

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

IT is one of the healthiest signs of the present day that all questions are treated as open to calm and serious investigation, however long and generally they may have been regarded as settled. The search for truth is the noblest occupation of the mind or heart, and as such must be pre-eminently an impulse from Him who made us as we are. To deserve our homage it needs, however, to be reverent; anxious to establish, not to destroy; patient in observation and research; and slow to admit conclusions which overthrow accepted opinions. It does not, of course, follow that because a belief is of long standing it is right; but respect for our fellows, the modesty of true science, and the presumption in favour of hereditary conviction, demand the most diffident humility in its examination.

To a large extent this is shown by our men of science; but the charm of a supposed new discovery, the tendency to see facts in the light of preconceived notions, and the rareness of the philosophical power to gather a sufficient basis of facts before generalizing, tend not seldom to induce a hastiness in advancing new theories, which has at least an air of rashness.

In no direction has this been more noticeable of late

years than in the speculations so much in vogue respecting the origin and the antiquity of man; for while some, like Dr. Darwin, have borne themselves with a modesty and ardent desire for truth which disarm personal feeling, even where the opinions advanced are most distasteful, others have been restrained by no self-distrustful humility, but have rivalled Oscar Schmidt, who supplies a genealogical tree, showing the descent of mankind from creatures on the level of the *Ornithorhynchus* of Australia.¹ In the same way some have hinted rather than asserted the immense antiquity of mankind, while others have dogmatised on the subject in a manner that is almost amusing. "Man," says M. Lalande, "is eternal."² "The Aryans," says M. Piétrement, "had tamed the horse and used it habitually at an epoch anterior to the year 19,337 before the Christian era."³

This vast antiquity has been claimed for our race on various grounds; especially that of geological evidence. Two hundred thousand years are assumed by some as the lowest estimate of man's appearance in Britain, but how much earlier he had existed elsewhere, before, is left an open question.⁴ A chronology has been invented, from changes of climate supposed to have extended through immense periods, and the traces of man are fitted into its spaces. The tools found have been classified, to mark successive ages of vast duration, as those, respectively, of

¹ Schmidt, *The Doctrine of Descent and Darwinism*, p. 270. The slightness of the grounds on which some prevalent geological theories are based, through the tendency of average scientific men to adopt blindly the hints of superior minds, and carry them out to rash lengths, is well shown in an able book, *Scepticism in Geology*. (London: Murray, 1874.)

² *Congrès Univ.*, 1867, *Compte Rendu*, p. 423.

³ *Les Origines du Cheval domestique*, p. 280.

⁴ Dr. James Geikie's *Great Ice Age*, p. 561.

the rough and the polished stone, the bronze, and the iron periods. The supposed evidence of deposits in caves, of river and other gravels, of fen-beds, of geographical changes, of the presence of extinct mammals along with human remains, are pressed into the service. But it staggers our faith in the whole chronological scheme to find, at the outset, that while one high authority reckons the boulder clay in which old stone implements are found as marking 200,000 years,¹ another, no less eminent, sets it down as 980,000 years old.² The age of human implements found under floors of stalagmite in caves is, moreover, open to equal doubt, since observers differ greatly as to the rate of deposit at different times;³ for while Mr. Pengelly tells us that it takes 5,000 years to create an inch of lime-dropping on the floor of Kent's Cavern,⁴ others assert that, elsewhere, it is formed at the rate of the third of an inch a year,⁵ which would give a foot in depth in little more than a century. A copper plate of the twelfth or thirteenth century, we are told, was found in a cave at Gibraltar, under eighteen inches of stalagmite.⁶ At Knaresboro', objects are incrustated with similar calcareous deposit so quickly, that, as is well known, a trade in them is briskly kept up. In Italy, the waters of the baths of San Filippo have been known to deposit a solid mass of it, thirty feet thick, in twenty years.⁷ It is thus clear that the rate of deposit depends on circumstances. One condition of the surface

¹ Geikie's *Great Ice Age*, pp. 529, 561.

² Croll's *Climate and Time*—On Boulder Clay and Till.

³ Mr. Callard, in *Nature* (January, 1874).

⁴ *Manchester Scientific Lectures* (1873-4), p. 130.

⁵ Mr. Boyd Dawkins, *Athenæum* (April 12th, 1873).

⁶ Southall's *Recent Origin of Man*, p. 221.

⁷ *Ibid.*

may supply acids, from decaying vegetation, for example, which may dissolve the limestone much faster than another. It is not, therefore, by any means certain that any given deposits, in a special case, imply even an approach to the extreme age demanded for them.

The evidence deduced from river and other gravels and drifts is no less unsatisfactory.¹ It is indeed quite impossible to fix their age either from their depth or their contents. Mr. Wood found the road leading to the Temple of Diana, at Ephesus, more than four yards below the present surface, and he obtained remains of colossal sculptures, at the Temple itself, from a depth of six yards and a half. Local floods work great changes, and it is to be remembered that all rivers are much larger in a country still in a state of nature than when human settlement has in great measure drained off the surface waters. The shifting of river beds themselves works great changes. M. De Rossi thinks that the beds of drift in the course of the Tiber are not older than the Roman Republic. M. Chabas, in a close examination of the tool-bearing drifts of Northern France, found that, at one part, bits of Roman pottery, at another, a copper coin of Charles VIII. of France, at a third, pieces of yellow brick, were as deep in the soil as the stone axes, etc., were at others, and finally gave up the hope of fixing the age of anything by its position.²

The theory of widely separate ages for old and new stone tools, and for bronze and iron, is one of those scientific fancies which further investigation overthrows. To use the words of the Duke of Argyle:³ "There is no proof whatever that such ages ever existed in the world." Nations may all at a certain time have used stone tools,

¹ Chabas, *Études sur l'Antiquité Historique*, p. 562.

² *Ibid*, chap. viii. p. 519. ³ *Primeval Man*, p. 181.

but the discovery of the metals must have been made much sooner at some places than at others. Thus, though flint implements have been found in abundance in South Africa, iron has been known from very ancient times over a large portion of that vast continent; iron ore, as Sir Samuel Baker informs us, being so common in Africa, and of a kind so easily reducible by heat, that its value might well be discovered by the rudest tribes. Stone, moreover, is rare in some countries, as, for example, in Mesopotamia, and hence it is not surprising to find that stone implements of a very rude character coexisted there with an advanced civilization in agriculture and commerce.¹ Each "age," in fact, runs into the other, and tools of all the four kinds were used in not a few localities at the same time. So far from being indefinitely ancient, the stone age, in all its characteristics, has prevailed during even the historical period. A well-made bronze pin was found in an excavation at the Isle of St. Jean, near Maçon, in France, which till then had yielded only remains of the polished stone period, and M. Chabas found iron under similar circumstances elsewhere.² "The age of bronze must be limited more and more," says Professor Desor. "Iron is found throughout it." In Holland, tumuli known as Hunnebedden (the graves of the Hunni) are common. Beneath the covering of soil are found rough casings of unhewn stone, covering chambers of stone, regularly squared and smoothed, with a flooring of broken granite. Under this, funeral urns are met with, along with numerous flint tools and weapons, such as polished hatchets, chisels, arrow-heads, hammers, etc. Some of these are rough, that is, of the oldest "age;" others are partly polished; still others, polished

¹ Rawlinson's *Two Great Monarchies*, vol. i. pp. 119, 120.

² *Etudes*, p. 522.

perfectly. Along with these, occur samples of pottery often of elegant shapes, and finely ornamented by means of instruments of wood or bone. Fifty of these barrows have been opened, without finding any trace of metal in them, and yet scientific men are of opinion that they are not older than the Roman period, when the country began to rise above the vast floods, which till then had covered it nearly every year. Holland and the neighbouring Low Countries seem, indeed, to have been formed from the vast beds of soil worn off the Alps and other mountains, by the glaciers which formerly reached to the North Sea, but have now retreated to Switzerland, and from deposits by the waters of the Rhine, the Meuse, the Scheldt, the Ems, and the Yssel. At first only the sandhills and other elevations, natural or artificial, were habitable, and these, in Cæsar's time, were still so many small islands, whose savage and brave inhabitants were believed to live on fish and the eggs of birds.¹ About the beginning of our era, the Batavians took possession of the country, but the Hunni lingered on amongst them even during the Roman period, and have left these tumuli, apparently remotely prehistoric, but, in fact, to give the words of M. Pleyte, dating from the commencement of our era to A.D. 500.

The Chevalier de Rossi has found equally striking proofs of the lateness of the stone age in Italy.² "The whole evidence," says he, "proves to demonstration that the new stone age was very near that of true history." This conclusion is confirmed by the discoveries so frequently made, and every day becoming more numerous, of stone weapons mixed with objects of bronze. I

¹ Cæsar, *Bell. Gall.*, iv.

² *Comptes Rendus du Congrès International d'Archæologie Préhistorique* (1871), p. 464.

myself have found early uncoined copper money (*aes rude*) along with polished stone weapons; and a number of flint knives have been obtained from Etruscan graves. Indeed, a piece of *coined* copper money, marking a still later period, has been found in an Etruscan tomb alongside a stone knife, undoubtedly of the "new stone period." Not less striking are the results of excavations on the sites of the Roman-Gallic cities of France. Thus at Bibracte, the largest, richest, and most important town of the Edui,¹ there have been discovered, after scientific explorations, remains of pottery, jewellery, enamel-work, work in metal and *coins*, mingled with flint arrow-heads, polished stone axes, and a flint knife. The same results have been obtained on the site of Gergovia, near Clermont; weapons, yases and large pins of bronze, pieces of jewellery and Gallic coins have been found along with stone knives, arrow-heads, axes, etc.² Similar stone weapons and tools have also been met with on the site of Alesia, in the Jura, with the skeletons of Gauls, their personal ornaments, and weapons of bronze and iron, and even the remains of their armour.

The lateness of the stone period has received further illustration by the discovery that the ancient Egyptians, though already possessing and using all the metals, and enjoying a high civilization, systematically used stone tools for mining and other purposes. Brugsch found them along with remains of ancient pottery at the turquoise mines of Midian.³ They are met with, moreover, so widely, and under such circumstances, through all Egypt, that it appears as if they continued to be used freely in common life.⁴ M. Mariette found in the tombs of the

¹ Cæsar, *Bell. Gall.*, i. and vii.

² Chabas, *Études*, p. 544.

³ Brugsch, *Wanderungen nach den Turgis Minen*, p. 71.

⁴ Chabas, *Études*, p. 377.

ancient Egyptian empire at Saqqara, and at the pyramids, bas-reliefs showing workmen cutting wood with a tool exactly resembling the stone axes of the Polynesian Archipelago. There is a stone knife in the British Museum bearing an inscription which shows that it is not older than the sixth century before Christ; another, at Athens, has a Greek inscription; while a third, at Copenhagen, has one in Runic characters. There is, indeed, no distinctively stone age in Egypt, but stone tools are found abundantly along with those of iron and other metals, as if the Egyptians used them for many of the same purposes, and with almost equal commonness, as the barbarous peoples round, who did not know the metals, or were unable to procure them. Mr. Keast Lord¹ found in his minute explorations of the mines of Midian, that the veins of metal had been worked by stone tools exclusively, many of which he brought away with him; and he mentions, also, that owing to geological changes, the lakes from which the miners obtained water for drinking, and for their operations, are now gone, though the shells of the fresh-water mussel, used for food by the miners, still remain in the old lake beds. Their huts, moreover, of rough dry stone, without mortar, and in everything bearing proofs of the highest antiquity, are still standing. Yet the inscriptions show incontestably that these workings, and the lakes themselves, date from within the strictly historical period, and even so late as the twelfth century before Christ. But for these inscriptions, however, how certainly would the mines have been referred to an unknown antiquity, accompanied as they are by the fact of the vanished lakes and the archaic huts? But it cannot be said that the stone period is even yet a matter of the past, for M.

¹ *Leisure Hour* (1870), pp. 423 ff.

Mariette, having noticed his Arab labourers shaving their heads with razors of flint, and the Arabs of Qournah having showed him Bedouin lances tipped with flint, justly says, that "he fancied himself transported to the stone period, and arrived at the conclusion that the age of stone survived in Egypt under the Pharaohs, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Arabs, and finally that it still, in a certain measure, survives in our own day."¹

Extreme antiquity has been claimed for man on the additional ground of the presence, with stone tools and weapons, of the bones of quadrupeds no longer found in the same latitudes. But who can tell the age of these bones? Parts of the mammoth, the cave bear, and the reindeer have been found at a depth of two feet under the surface in the caves of Rully de Germolles; and a human jaw, a mammoth's tooth, and a fine flint arrow have been found at the depth of thirty-two inches. Nor is it easy to judge of the time required for the disappearance of animals from a country. Within the historical period, the lion, the aurochs, and the bear abounded in Macedonia, and the boa in Calabria. The hippopotamus, which was hunted in Lower Egypt by the ancient Egyptians and still lived in the Damietta mouth of the Nile in the time of the Caliphs, is now never seen farther north than 19° —that is, eight degrees farther south. The crocodile frequented the Delta 3,000 years ago; now, it never comes north of 27° , and is steadily going south. The reindeer seems, from a passage in Cæsar, to have still lived in Gaul in his days, for he speaks of "an ox of the shape of a deer, from whose head, between its ears, a horn rises higher and less straight than the horns known to us. From its top (that is, from the top of this common base) branches spread out widely, like palms. Both male

¹ Chabas, *Études*, p. 396. Dawson's *Fossil Man*, pp. 205 ff.

and female have the same shape and extent of horns.”¹ The similarity of the head of a reindeer to that of the ox is well known, and the fact of male and female having similar horns is peculiar to it. It still lives in Asia even lower than 50°, and in America to 46°, which is fully 2° farther south than the latitude of Paris, and nearly on a line with Geneva, and with Odessa, in southern Russia.

The fact of great changes of climate in our Northern hemisphere at widely separate periods is a geological fact which none affect to dispute, but there is a wide difference of opinion as to the frequency of these changes or their cause. “In the tertiary epoch,” says Heer, “a distribution of heat is discernible in zones, but the decrease of heat towards the poles was much less marked than at present. Whilst the tropical zone was probably little warmer than in our own day, Central Europe during the lower Miocene period had a climate nearly equivalent to that of the Southern United States, or that of North Africa. Under the Arctic zone, in lat. 78° N., the island of Spitzbergen was covered with forests of swamp-cypress, sequoia,² many kinds of pines, plane-trees, walnuts, oaks, and lime-trees—a fact which justifies the belief that vegetation reached to the pole itself, if the land extended to it. Since then the heat has been diminishing. During the earliest glacial period it sank several degrees below the present mean annual temperature, and continued so for thousands of years. Then it rose again, and the Swiss lignite beds were formed, the forest bed of the coast of Norfolk, and the elephant and rhinoceros inhabited these regions. It then fell once more, and a second glacial period began. Then it rose again, and has continued unchanged ever since.” The cause of the greater heat of the Miocene period Heer

¹ Cæsar, *Bell. Gall.*, vi. 24.

² Our *Wellingtonia gigantea*.

thinks may have been from the sun traversing a warmer region of space than it moves in now—all regions sharing in the greater warmth.¹ Dr. Blandet supposes that the sun was originally much larger than it is—the planets having been thrown off from it in its revolution.

The higher temperature of the Northern Pole as compared with the Southern is supposed by Heer to rise from the distribution of land round the two—the southern having almost none. Dr. Croll, a scientific man of high eminence, on the other hand, fancies it rises from the varying inclination of the earth's axis, which, he believes, causes the relative position of the two poles towards the sun to be periodically reversed at distant periods.

According to that writer and Dr. James Geikie, "the seasons in the two hemispheres are reversed every 10,500 years," during certain "periods of high ellipticity of the earth's orbit." The last of these periods we are told "began some 200,000 years ago, and terminated about 80,000 years ago—embracing a period of 160,000 years." During this immense cycle, therefore, there must have been not two glacial periods, as Heer imagines, in reference to the ages since the Miocene, but fifteen changes of climate within 160,000 years; each change reversing the seasons in the two hemispheres—the pole which had "enjoyed continuous summer" being "doomed to undergo perpetual winter" for 10,500 years, and then passing to its former state for an equal term: oscillating, in fact, between heat and Arctic cold at these intervals for the 160,000 years. Man, it is affirmed, inhabited Western Europe, at least in the warm periods, from the beginning of the 200,000 years. But a theory, however acute,² is ■

¹ Heer's *Primeval World of Switzerland*, vol. ii. p. 270.

² I would here express my high sense of the ability, learning, and desire for truth alone, of both Dr. Croll and my honoured relative Dr. James Geikie, though I am forced to differ from them.

dangerous toy, when the facts by which it seeks its justification are interpreted in opposite ways by equally learned men. The approximate dates of the glacial periods are matters of keen dispute, nor can we accept imaginary chronology, however famous its author. It is simply a guess, and carries no authority whatever. Moreover, the dates of these periods have no necessary connection with the antiquity of man, for the proof of human remains or implements being found in glacial drifts are sadly defective, and in any case their mere accidental proximity to traces of glacial action could in no degree prove that both have a common age. If so, Roman remains found in a glacial drift may settle the Roman period as a million years ago.

The character of the animals, now extinct in the countries where their remains are found in connection with those of man, has been held to prove the lapse of vast periods, for some now represent a tropical, while others are found only in an Arctic climate. It is arguing unsafely, however, to say that, because the rhinoceros, for example, is now found only in the tropics, it never lived in colder latitudes. The body of one "still retaining its corpulency," its skin, its tendons, and some of its flesh, was discovered in 1771, in Siberia, on the banks of the Wilaji river, a tributary of the Lena, at the latitude of about 65° north,—that is, on a line with the middle of Iceland. It was particularly noticed that it was covered with hair to enable it to withstand the cold: a peculiarity which existed in the mammoth also, with the same object.¹ That huge animals like these could find subsistence in latitudes so high involves no difficulty, for hardy

¹ A mammoth found in Siberia, in 1804, had very close set red wool an inch and a half long over its skin, with black hair rising above it—an Arctic covering, in fact.

trees and shrubs still grow far north, in Siberia, and therefore, to use Prof. Owen's words, "we may safely infer that the mammoth would have found the requisite means of subsistence, from the twigs and branches, at the present day, and at all seasons, in the sixtieth parallel of latitude; and relying on the body of evidence adduced by Sir Charles Lyell, in proof of increased severity in the climate of the northern hemisphere, we may assume that the mammoth habitually frequented still higher latitudes at the period of its actual existence. It has been suggested that as in our own times the northern animals migrate, so the Siberian rhinoceros and elephant may have wandered towards the north in summer. The hairy covering of the mammoth concurs with the localities of its most abundant remains, in showing that, like the reindeer, the northern extreme of the temperate zone was its metropolis."¹

Strange to say, the wider range of the elephant—of which the mammoth is a species—in antiquity, is illustrated by the hieroglyphics of Egypt and the cuneiform inscriptions of Assyria, for the former commemorate the killing of 120 in the chase, in Northern Syria, by Thothmes III. in the seventeenth century before Christ,² and the latter speaks of them as hunted in Mesopotamia five centuries later.³

Thus it is clear that the presence in northern countries of animals now only found in warm climates, or the disappearance of others from a given region, is no proof whatever of the lapse of very great periods of time.

¹ Prof. Owen, quoted in art. Elephant, *English Cyclop.*

² Brugsch's *Egypt*, vol. i. p. 358. Maspero's *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 205.

³ Chabas, *Études*, p. 579. The Bengal tiger abounds in lat. 48°, to which the polar tailless hare sometimes wanders. *Antiq. of Man*, p. 158.

The comparatively modern date of the stone age throws a reflected light on the time when the reindeer, elephant, great bear, etc., lived in North-western Europe, for stone tools, as well cut as those of the "new stone period," have been found among their remains, some of which still exhibit spirited sketches of the reindeer, mammoth, etc., graved on them by some sharp instrument. The theory of a vast interval between the rough and the polished stone eras, or between them and that of bronze and iron, will not, in fact, stand examination, for they are often found together and continually occur under circumstances which decide their comparatively recent origin; and the supposition that the period of the mammoth, reindeer, rhinoceros, etc., necessarily mark equally vast and remote intervals cannot be maintained.

One point appears to have been strangely overlooked by the advocates for the immense antiquity of man—that geological changes are and have been continually going on. The geological period in fact dates from this moment back. The land in the Gulf of Bothnia rises at the rate of thirty-nine inches in a century, which in 3,000 years would give an elevation above its former level at that date, of over thirty-seven feet. But such a depression would turn Russia, from St. Petersburg to Sebastopol, into a great lake, with who can tell what effect in modifying the climate? No one can say that such a steady elevation has not been the gradual creation of Russia, within a comparatively recent period, by slowly draining off the waters of some ancient Scythian ocean—the sea, perhaps, beyond which the Hyperboreans were anciently thought to live.

¹ Prof. Green says from two to three feet in a century. *Geology*, p. 337. Prof. Jukes says that about the North Cape the land rises five or six feet in a century. *Manual of Geology*, p. 52.

A rise of two hundred and twenty feet in the volcanic region of the Bosphorus would effect equally startling results, for it needs no more than that to spread an inland fresh-water ocean from the plains of the Lower Danube and Southern Russia, over the areas of the Black, the Caspian, and the Aral Seas, with their neighbouring steppes, far and near—to create, in fact, a second Mediterranean.¹ With the surface of the earth rising and sinking by steady oscillation in so many regions even now, who can say that the tradition is wrong which ascribes the drainage of this vast region to a volcanic commotion rending open the Bosphorus about 1,500 years before Christ, and causing the terrible catastrophe which antiquity handed down in the legend of Deucalion's flood—the flood, it may be, of Genesis?

Nor is this great geological change alone in the recent history of our globe. Dr. Hecker, of Berlin, notices the fact that in the terrible paroxysms of nature which accompanied or preceded the Black Death, in the fourteenth century—the most awful mortality that ever attacked mankind—huge icebergs were formed on the east coast of Greenland, then inhabited by Northmen from Denmark and Iceland, and that since then neither the land nor its people have ever been seen.² The German Arctic Expedition of 1869–70, indeed, by the utmost efforts caught glimpses of the land, but their vessel was presently destroyed, and the crew saved only by drifting southwards on an icefloe for eight months together.³ For twenty-six years before the Black Death, physical convulsions shook the surface of the earth in uninterrupted succession. Vast river districts were converted into swamps; ■

¹ Wood's *Shores of Lake Aral*, p. 117.

² Hecker's *Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, p. 28.

³ *The German Arctic Expedition* (London, 1874), passim.

lake of more than 100 leagues in circumference was formed in China, by the disappearance of a whole chain of mountains; in thousands of places chasms opened; springs burst out on the tops of hills, and dry tracts were laid under water in an inexplicable way.¹ Calamities and phenomena, in fact, which usually come singly, at distinct intervals, were crowded together, as no experience could have imagined possible.

We believe, then, to quote the words of a most intelligent and well-informed writer, that "in the present state of our knowledge, attempts to estimate the age of the human race are premature, and that all statements which assign from 6,000 to 250,000 or more years, as the time which has elapsed since certain individuals ceased to exist, require revisal. On the whole, it appears probable that man existed with many of the extinct mammalia with whose remains his own are associated; but, notwithstanding all that has been said or written, we do not know even one fact which thoroughly establishes this point. . . . It is possible they may have existed ages before."²

On every ground science may, thus, well be diffident in reasoning on the past from the present, or in constructing a chronology of ages for the existence of man, when each footstep of it is open to the gravest challenge.

¹ *Hecker*, pp. 8, 14.

² *Art. Man. Supplement to English Encyclopædia.*





CHAPTER X.

ANTIQUITY AND ORIGIN OF MAN.

IN the last century the advocates of the extreme antiquity of the human race based their speculations on the highly scientific grounds of such astronomical evidence as they believed to be supplied by the Egyptian zodiacs, the inclination of the earth's pole, the position of the constellations, and the like. Thus Dupuis, the author of the once celebrated book "*L'Origine de tous les Cultes*,"—The Origin of all Religions,—expresses his astonishment in finding his ideas exactly supported by the ancient zodiacs. But he was moderate, in his own opinion. "It is not necessary to place back further than 14,000 or 15,000 years the invention, not indeed of astronomy, but of the hieroglyphic figures of the zodiac which the Greeks received from the Egyptians and the Chaldeans." Proud of his discoveries, he adds, "Thus I have cast the anchor of truth into the midst of the ocean of ages."

But he had cast his anchor into the midst of an ocean of error instead of into that of truth, for at the very time when his book was published, a child, the future Champollion, was born at Figeac, who, thirty years later, discovered the secret of hieroglyphics. The Egyptian zodiacs were then found to date only from the Roman period, and Dupuis' theory was proved a mere dream.

It is necessary, indeed, at all times, alike for men of science, and for the public who listen to them, to be cautious. Like all the world besides, scientists are, as a rule, disciples rather than masters, and confidently repeat the theories of a few men of original ideas, with a mechanical submission which makes no effort to winnow the truth in them, from its inevitable mixture of errors. Thus Hutton suggested, that the same causes as are at work at present in nature, are to be regarded as the sufficient factors in all the geological phenomena of the past. Sir Charles Lyell adopted this view, and supported it with such fulness of illustration that it became the accepted basis of modern geology. But not contented with recognising a great truth in it, subject to modification, more or less frequently, under the different conditions of the development of the crust of the globe, his followers have repeated his ideas with a docile literality, from which independent thought was conspicuously wanting. It is refreshing, therefore, to find a man like Professor Green, of Leeds, of enough original force of mind to break at last the spell under which speculative geology has lain too long, by questioning whether, after all, the physical phenomena of the past were always as gentle and unmarked as at present; whether, in fact, the demand for an indefinite lapse of time for the phenomena of the earth's crust can be justified. The extreme views hitherto in vogue are thus challenged in their turn, and we are asked to believe the much more rational theory, that while the present natural causes were demonstrably main factors in the development of the earth's crust, others, of indefinitely greater force and rapidity of action, from time to time burst into play.¹

In the same way, the pre-glacial man of Mr. Boyd

¹ Green's *Geology*, p. 522.

Dawkins,¹ and the theories of Dr. Croll, are infallibly destined to find themselves superseded, after a time, when some fresh and powerful brain marks a new departure in scientific leadership.

The extreme antiquity of man has been maintained on the ground of the extreme antiquity of extinct or existing civilizations, but, as it seems, on inadequate grounds. Chinese chronology was fancied, at one time, to run back authentically to periods astoundingly remote, but a better knowledge of the subject has latterly shown that the historical period in China does not reach farther from us at most than 2200 years before Christ.² Dr. Edkins, indeed, would limit it to B.C. 781, or at most to B.C. 1154.³ India was supposed at one time to boast of a history whose shadowy periods triumphantly disproved the Scripture teaching of the lateness of man's creation. But science now grants that the earliest Indian event it can trace is the descent of the Aryan tribes from the tablelands of Asia to the plains of Hindustan, "perhaps about the year B.C. 2000."⁴

Failing in the case of China and India, Egypt seemed next to offer itself as a country of immemorial antiquity. Boeckh,⁵ a distinguished German scholar, set down the date of the reign of Menes, who is universally accepted as the first king of Egypt, at 5702 years before Christ. Unger,⁶ another great German scholar, preferred the year 5613. Mariette Bey, the learned French Director of the Antiquarian Museum at Cairo, strikes off the odd cen-

¹ *Cave Hunting*, by Boyd Dawkins, *passim*.

² Brockhaus' *Conversations Lex.* (xii. Auf.), vol. iv. p. 611.

³ *Leisure Hour* (1876), p. 653.

⁴ Brockhaus' *Conversations Lex.* (xii. Auf.), vol. xi. p. 325.

⁵ Born 1785, died 1867.

⁶ Born 1800, died 1870.

turies, and fixes Menes at 5004 years before Christ, in which he is followed by Lenormant,¹ his most distinguished disciple. Professor Maspero, of Paris, thinks the year 4500 about the proper date. Brugsch Bey, a German long resident in Egypt, and the author of a learned "History of Egypt derived entirely from the Monuments,"² has chosen the year 4455. Lepsius³ and Ebers, master and disciple,⁴ but both deservedly famous as Egyptologists, think that Menes reigned 3892 years before Christ. The Chevalier Bunsen⁵ at first assigned the year 3623 to him, but at a later time thought the year 3059 more correct. Our own Dr. Birch,⁶ the head of the Egyptian Department in the British Museum, and of merited fame in his special studies, decides for "about the year before Christ 3000." Mr. Reginald Stuart Poole,⁷ head of the Numismatic Department in the British Museum, and devoted to Egyptian studies, thinks the proper date the year 2717; while the late Sir G. Wilkinson,⁸ whose great book on the Ancient Egyptians entitles him to the highest consideration, agreeing in the main with Mr. Poole, ascribe the accession of Menes to the year before Christ 2691.

Between the highest and the lowest of these calculations there is a difference of no less than 3011 years, and yet they are all the estimates of distinguished men. The result involved in such a variation is the same as if

¹ *Manuel de l'Histoire Ancienne*, p. 321.

² An English translation has just been published in two vols. 1879.

³ In his *Chronologie der Egypten* (1849).

⁴ *Eine Ägyptische Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 211.

⁵ *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, vol. v. p. 63.

⁶ *Egypt from the Earliest Times*, p. 23.

⁷ *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i. p. 508.

⁸ Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. ii. p. 287.

some future historian were to date the reign of our present queen from the year 1837, while another maintained that her proper place was in the days of Moses. Let us see how is it that eminent Egyptologists differ so much.

The only authority for Egyptian chronology, till recently, was the lists of kings quoted by various ancient writers from the lost book of Manetho, an Egyptian priest of the third century before Christ. But his figures have been a constant perplexity to students, since he follows the Egyptian custom of counting all the years of kings who reigned more or less together, as when a son was crowned during his father's life.¹ No wonder that Brugsch should say that this source of error alone "places such doubts and difficulties in the way, as to make one despair in putting together a chronological table of the old Egyptian empire."²

To add to this hopelessness, the Egyptians themselves had no conception of chronology,³ and give us no dates from which to reckon. Manetho's figures, moreover, "easily lend themselves to all the chronological systems;"⁴ while the only corroborative list of royal names,—that of a document found at Abydos, and known as the Turin papyrus,—is so mutilated that it affords very imperfect aid in checking Manetho's lists. Still more, "the monuments are beginning more and more to discredit his numbers," so that "unless we choose, without any war-

¹ Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 120.

² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³ "The greatest hindrance to a regular Egyptian chronology is the circumstance that the Egyptians themselves never had any chronology at all."—*Lenormant*, vol. i. p. 322.

"Everything still remains to be done in this province (that of chronology) so far as relates to the time preceding the XXVI. Dynasty (that is to the year B.C. 666)."—*Brugsch*, vol. i. p. xviii.

⁴ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 183.

rant, to strain his indefinitely elastic lists at our pleasure, there remains no other course than to wait till some fortunate discovery relieves us from this dangerous experiment."¹ Brugsch bases his figures on the estimate that three reigns were exactly equal to a hundred years,² while Canon Rawlinson tells us that twenty years is the real average duration of the reign of Eastern kings,³ and as if this were not enough to discredit extreme conclusions, no one knows what kings reigned together or when each began to reign singly.

The high antiquity of Egyptian civilization was at one time thought to be proved by relics obtained by Mr. Horner from borings in the mud of the Delta, and indeed Ebers quotes them even now in support of it.⁴ That a piece of pottery had been found at the depth of 39 feet was taken as proof its having been buried for 13,000 years.⁵ Sir J. Lubbock and Sir C. Lyell, accepting this conclusion, came to wonderful conclusions; for their estimates, with those of various papers read before learned societies, are that bricks and pottery in Egypt date from 12,000 to 60,000 years back. Unfortunately for all this fine speculation, Sir Robert Stephenson found in the Delta, near Damietta, at a greater depth than Mr. Horner ever reached, a brick bearing on it the stamp of Mohammed Ali.⁶ Mr. Horner, moreover, supposed the rate of the deposit of mud, at a given spot, only three and a half inches in a century,⁷ but the description of the

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. i. pp. xix. xx.

² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³ *Origin of Nations*, p. 20.

⁴ *Ägypten und der Bücher Mose's*, p. 22.

⁵ Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times*, p. 395.

⁶ Southall's *Recent Origin of Man*, p. 474.

⁷ The changes in the Hooghly are so rapid that it is impossible to fix the limits of property on its borders, that which is solid ground one year being swallowed up, and new territory formed

same spot by a Mahometan writer only six centuries ago, shows that the mud is deposited at the rate of over eighteen inches in a hundred years.¹ No wonder that even the *Anthropological Review* pronounces Mr. Horner's evidence as preposterous, and laments that Sir Charles Lyell "should have thought it worth his while to notice such absurdities."²

The rise of Babylonian civilization was long supposed, on the authority of fragments of a book by Berosus, a priest at Babylon about 260 years before Christ, to be as old as the Egyptian had been fancied to be, on the authority of Manetho. But here, too, the advance of exact knowledge has dissipated exaggeration. Scholars are now virtually agreed that the earliest traces of Babylonian history date, at most, only to the year 2500 before Christ,³ though Berosus had assigned the Flood to the year 41,697, and the legends of the cuneiform tablets claim a reign of 432,000 years for ten kings before that calamity. George Smith and Professor Sayce, indeed, think that "no contemporary monuments can be placed earlier than 2300 years before Christ, and even this date may be too early for our oldest known monuments,"⁴ and Lenormant is of the same opinion.⁵ Allowing ample time for the first stages of tribal or national development,

in other parts. It is the same with the Lower Mississippi where there are no dams.

¹ Southall, p. 474.

² "Pieces of brick stamped with the Grecian honeysuckle, and therefore, at the earliest, dating from the time of Alexander the Great, have been obtained from as great depths as Mr. Horner's borings."—Saville, *On the Truth of the Bible*, p. 26.

³ Brockhaus' *Conversations Lex.* (xii. Auf.), vol. ii. p. 629.

⁴ Smith's *Babylonia*, edited by Prof. Sayce, p. 54. Schrader's *Babylonien*, in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*.

⁵ Lenormant, *Manuel d'Histoire Ancienne de l'Orient*, vol. ii. p. 22.

this would at most carry Babylonian history to a date of 3000 years, or thereabouts, before Christ.

The evidence of language has been advanced as another ground for believing in the extreme antiquity of the human race, but it is a great question if it be entitled to any weight. The descent of the Aryan tribes into Hindustan, for example, is fixed by the highest authorities at not further back, at the most, than about 2000 years before Christ,¹ but what changes and developments have taken place since then in the Sanscrit language which they spoke! It has itself died out, but from it have sprung the Hindu dialects of India, the Zend of ancient Persia, the Greek, Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Wallachian; the different Celtic languages; the Gothic, German, and Scandinavian languages, including English; and the Slavonic, of which there are many mutually unintelligible dialects in Russia, Austria, and Bulgaria. Iceland was colonized by the Northmen in the ninth century; but their language, then pure Scandinavian, is not understood by other Scandinavian races now. The Nibelungen Lied is only seven hundred years old, but its German is a sealed language except to scholars. A thousand years ago a national song might have waked enthusiasm over all the area in which English, Dutch, and German are now spoken in Europe, for its language would have been everywhere understood. Since the colonization of Iceland, three new languages, of course related, have sprung from the Scandinavian—the Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian. Fifteen hundred years ago Latin was the

¹ Haug, indeed (*Essays on the Sacred Language, etc., of the Parsees*, p. 225), assigns the date of B.C. 1500 for the dawn of Iranic civilization, or that of the Medes, Persians, and perhaps the Bactrians, while Max Müller (*Ancient Sanscrit Lit.*, p. 572) thinks that Indian civilization began about B.C. 1200.

mother tongue of all the nations now speaking the Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, and Wallachian. There are nearly a hundred languages spoken at this time in the Caucasus, and in South America Humboldt reckoned them by hundreds. Amongst the one hundred islands occupied by the Melanesian race, there are no less than two hundred languages, differing from each other as much as Dutch and German. Among some races of Central Africa, Barth tells us, the want of friendly intercourse between tribes and families has caused so many dialects to spring up as to make communication between them difficult. On the river Amazon Mr. Bates found several individuals in a canoe speaking mutually unintelligible languages. It is, in fact, impossible to fix any approximate period for the rise of new forms of speech. "If there be nothing like literature or society to keep changes within limits," says Max Müller, "two villages, separated for only a few generations, will soon become mutually unintelligible. This takes place in America as well as on the borders of China and India; and in the north of Asia, Messerschmidt relates that the Ostiaks, though really speaking the same language everywhere, have produced so many words and forms peculiar to each tribe, that even within the limit of ten or twelve German miles, conversation between them becomes extremely difficult." What then must have been the history of language in the early ages of the world, when each hamlet was at war with its neighbour; when society, literature, and civilization were yet unborn, and when the human mind itself had as yet the instability and ignorance of childhood?

Looked at, therefore, from every point of view, there seems no ground for placing the appearance of mankind on the earth further back than the Bible has assigned, but, on the contrary, every reason for accepting its state-

ments. The keenest critical investigation has decided with a wonderful unanimity that the history of our race, except in the case of Egypt, does not reach further back from the present day than about 4,500 years; while, as to the antiquity of Egypt itself, scholars differ to the extent of no less than 3,000 years. But even if we were to take the period as approximately correct, which Lepsius and Ebers adopt—3892 years before Christ, it would be perfectly reconcilable with the chronology of the Bible, of which, as has been shown, we have no authoritative statement. It would at most take us back 5,700 years, and leave, according to many eminent chronologists, ample margin for all that is related in Genesis of an earlier date. But the subject is in apparently hopeless confusion and darkness. It is at least free to all to withhold full assent to chronological systems, when even their authors admit that the data on which they are based are largely conjectural. Nor is it easy to imagine how Egypt, if civilized two thousand years before any other nation, should for all these centuries have been a centre of light, without transmitting some of its brightness to countries around, with which it was in constant intercourse.

The varieties of the human race have been held another proof of its extreme antiquity. The contrast between the negro and other branches of mankind has especially been insisted upon, the fact being often quoted that we find him mentioned in a historical Egyptian document of the seventh Dynasty,¹ and depicted exactly as he is, on the monuments, at a later period. But the rise of a new type and even of a new colour of mankind is not unknown even within the historical period. The Jews of the East are now as black as the inhabitants, while those of cold countries are as fair as Caucasians. The

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 99. *Records of the Past*, vol. ii. p. 3.

American differs in the whole physical appearance and in the shape of his face from the Englishman, whose near descendant he is. The Turks of Europe in a few centuries have diverged so far from their Tartar original that they are sometimes referred to the Caucasian stock, though we know their Mongolian origin. The Magyars of Hungary have lost in a thousand years nearly every trace of the Tartar features of their ancestors—the Ostiaks of Northern Siberia. The tall, lank American Indians can be recognised as derived from the squat and strongly marked Mongol, only by the unerring witness of their various languages. Who would suspect the uncouth and stunted Lapp to be of the same family as the tall, well-formed, handsome Magyar? Yet they were originally one.

The negro seems, indeed, to have assumed his typical characteristics from special conditions, in a tropical climate. "The real African," says Winwood Reade,¹ a most competent witness "is copper-coloured, and superior to the negro, mentally and physically. It is my belief that the negro inhabits only maritime districts, or the marshy districts of the interior; that he originally belonged to the copper-coloured race; and that his degeneration of type is due entirely to the influence of climate and food." The privations of the natives of Connemara, in the year preceding the famine of 1847, were remarked as having led to a change in the whole physical type: the jaws becoming prominent, as in the negro, and the whole man affected. It is to be remembered, moreover, that a modification of structure or colour once introduced becomes permanent, and that circumstances may lead to it to the most surprising extent in a very short time, as in the lower animals. All the varieties of domestic pigeons

¹ *Anthropological Review* (Nov. 1864), p. 341.

are traced by Darwin to the stock-dove,¹ and are rightly ascribed by him to artificial selection by man. Accidental malformation may be artificially perpetuated, when desired, by separation of the malformed as the stock of a new variety. The different breeds of sheep, horses, oxen, goats, cats, rabbits, and still more of domestic fowl, show that all these species, even while under human observation, are subject to greater variations than are found in the different races of men.²

Whether the different families which repeopled the earth after the Deluge had already become more or less contrasted, is not within the possibility of answer. But with the acknowledged changes in bony structure and colour, which have been quoted from instances within recent times, there surely remains no surpassing difficulty in the belief that the negro may early have assumed his special characteristics, from special influences of locality and food; and these, by a law of nature, would be perpetuated ever after. The words of Darwin respecting varieties in domestic animals need only slight change to be applied to mankind. "The argument mainly relied on by those who believe in the multiple origin of our domestic animals is, that we find in the most ancient records, more especially on the monuments of Egypt, much diversity in the breeds; and that some of the breeds resemble, perhaps are identical with, those still existing. Even if this latter fact were found more strictly and generally true than seems to me to be the case, what does it show, but that some of our breeds originated there, four or five thousand years ago."³

¹ *Origin of Species*, p. 23. Many interesting facts on the subject of this chapter may be found in Wiseman's *Connexion between Science and Revealed Religion*.

² See, on this, *Eng. Cyclo.*, vol. ix. p. 670.

³ *Origin of Species*, I. 18.



CHAPTER XI.

ORIGIN OF MAN, AND HIS PRIMITIVE CONDITION, ETC.

IT is now nine years since Mr. Darwin published his "Descent of Man" (1871), which startled the world by calmly maintaining that we have sprung, by slow and almost imperceptible stages, from the lower animals. Man's extreme antiquity on the earth, which had first been broached about twelve years before, was thenceforward urged with increased confidence. But, to use the words of Mr. Wallace, one of the foremost of living naturalists, and the most eminent supporter of some of Mr. Darwin's views: "It is a curious circumstance that, notwithstanding the attention that has been directed to the subject in every part of the world, and the numerous excavations connected with railways and mines, which have offered such facilities for geological discoveries, no advance whatever has been made for a considerable number of years in detecting the time or mode of man's origin. The Palæolithic (old rough) flint implements, first discovered in the North of France more than thirty years ago, are still the oldest undisputed proofs of man's existence; and amid the countless relics of a former world that have been brought to light, no evidence of any one of the links that must have connected man with

the lower animals has yet appeared.”¹ Two skulls, supposed to be the oldest as yet found, show no trace of inferiority. One is not of so low a type as that of most existing savages, but, to use the words of Professor Huxley, “may have belonged to a philosopher, or may have contained the thoughtless brains of a savage”; the other, as Dr. Pruner-Bey informs us, surpasses the average of modern European skulls; while its symmetrical form compares favourably with the skulls of many civilized nations of modern times.

Nor is the want of evidence of the development of humbler into higher races limited to man. Its utter absence in the case of the lower animals, and of plants, goes far to show that the theory has no basis of facts in nature, and that it is thus most unlikely to be correct in reference to human beings. The doctrine of the transformation of species,” says Heer, “is most decidedly contradicted by facts. Not only has no new species originated during the period of human history, but even the lignites (or woody coal), which go back to a much earlier time, exhibit the existing flora. The present Swiss Alpine plants are the descendants of the Alpine drift flora, but, though living under different physical conditions, it is impossible to distinguish those of the present day from plants of the drift flora of Iceland and Greenland. It is the same with marine animals. No new species has had its origin since the drift period.

¹ *Tropical Nature and other Essays*, p. 286, by A. R. Wallace. Mr. Wallace, like Mr. Boyd Dawkins (*Cave Hunting*), believes man to have been pre-glacial—that is, to have existed hundreds of thousands of years ago. Hence his words on the origin of man have the greater weight. It should be remembered, however, that he is no geologist, and simply takes the word of others as to the extreme antiquity of the race.

Nor is this peculiar to the drift. The same facts are true of preceding geological periods. The same species maintain their existence through long cycles, and often, in all parts of the globe, present precisely the same characteristics. The formation immediately following any earlier period, and belonging to a new epoch, may contain some species inherited from the preceding period, but the greater part of the species show us a new type, and present distinct characteristics. There are no forms which would indicate a fusion of species.”¹ Such is the testimony of one of the acutest observers, and most accomplished geologists of the day.

It has further been noticed, that so far from deterioration as we go back, we find it rather as we come down towards the present; for the oldest cave dwellings, claimed by some scientific men as marking an immemorial antiquity for the race, show a far higher degree of mental activity and civilization in their inhabitants than the relics of what are held to be much later times. The variety of tools and weapons—scrapers, awls, hammers, saws, lances, etc.—the numerous bone implements, including well-formed needles; implying that skins were sewn together, and perhaps even textile materials woven into cloth—above all, the numerous carvings and drawings, representing a variety of animals, such as horses, reindeer, and even a mammoth; executed with considerable skill on bone, reindeer horns, and mammoth tusks; show a state of civilization much higher than that of some of our modern savages, and lead to the belief that the most ancient skulls we possess, are not exceptional in their high development, but fairly represent the characters of the then existing race. Thus, instead of growing like the

¹ *Heer*, vol. ii. pp. 282, 291. Dr. Heer, we believe, died last year

animals, as he recedes into dim antiquity, man has, at best, only preserved the high type shown in these, his earliest ancestors.¹

Since, then, no trace of an approach to the ape, in any particular, has been found in any geological deposit or superficial drift, we may dismiss the simial origin of man as a baseless, because utterly unsupported theory. The lowest rocks have preserved the traces of marine worms and other zoophytes, the carboniferous strata entomb specimens of reptiles, fruits, flowers, and leaves, and of the spiders and insects then existing: the other rocks abound in the remains of animals of all kinds, and retain even the impress of the foot of a bird or a small reptile, and of the rain-drops of a passing shower, on what was once soft sand. Surely, then, some traces would have been forthcoming of the missing links between man and the lower orders had they ever existed. It will be time enough to dwell on the creature "not worthy to be called a man," which Sir J. Lubbock thinks was our immediate ancestor, when he produces some sign of his

¹ In reference to the flint tools and weapons found in caves like those of Devonshire or Derbyshire, it has been said that the fact of the mouths of the caves being now high above the level of streams which formerly overflowed into them, marks an untold lapse of time. But elevations of land are common, frequently rapid, and often, moreover, very limited in their range. The well-known case of the Temple of Serapis, at Puzzuoli, near Naples, shows that within the historic period, the spot where it stands was once beneath the sea; was afterwards upraised, and became the site of a temple older than the one whose remains are now standing; was possibly again submerged, and again upraised before the building of the present ruin; was again let down till the sea rose at least twenty feet above the pavement of the Temple; was again raised into dry land, and is now slowly sinking once more. Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, vol. ii. chap. xxx. Green's *Geology* 46.

ever having been more than a philosopher's invention. Till then we prefer to extend to both the physiology and higher nature of man the words which Professor Huxley limits to the latter; that between man and all lower animals, even the highest, there is a difference so wide that it cannot be measured—"an enormous gulf," "a divergence immeasurable" and "practically infinite." Indeed he might almost, apparently, have adopted the words of Max Müller: "Man alone employs language,—he alone comprehends himself,—alone has the power of abstraction,—alone possesses general ideas. He alone believes in God."¹ When such absolute contrasts obtrude themselves, the choice of opinions seems easy. There may well have been in the Creator's plan occasional development of powers, or changes of appearance, as the result of long-continued change of outward relations; but, beyond this, the theory of man's descent or that of other creatures, from races below them, remains a mere theory still, in spite of the zealous efforts of a school to elevate it to something more. For our part, we prefer to believe with Moses, that our race is a species created by itself, and endowed directly by the Almighty with unique mental and spiritual characteristics, rather than with the anthropologists, who would trace us back to the lower creatures.

The original state of man has been supposed, by those who believe in his extreme antiquity, to have been one of "utter barbarism,"² wanting even elementary religious ideas; our present civilization being the gradual development of untold ages.

But there are many grounds for questioning this theory. It cannot, for instance, be inferred that the discovery

¹ *Chips, etc.* vol. iv. p. 458.

² This is the view of Sir J. Lubbock, in his *Prehistoric Man*.

of rude stone implements in any country is an index of the state of civilization in other parts of the world at the same time, for in that case the South Sea Islanders and the Eskimo would determine the estimate of our present condition in a way hardly just. Nor can the finding similar tools in Germany, France, or England be any measure of the civilization existing at the period to which they belong on the banks of the Euphrates or Nile.¹

It is the mode of this school to collect all the most degraded and savage customs and usages of any people, and assume that they are traces of the original condition of the race. But such a course is utterly unphilosophical, for it may with equal force be urged that they are illustrations of the decay of a primitive civilization, under circumstances leading to such degradation. That tribes and nations have thus sunk is beyond a question. Herodotus² tells us of the Geloni, a Greek people, who, having been expelled from the cities on the northern coast of the Euxine, had retired into the interior, and there lived in wooden huts, and spoke a language "half Greek, half Scythian." By the first century after Christ, Mela tells us they had become completely barbarous, and used the skins of their slain enemies as coverings for themselves and their horses.³ The Veddas of Ceylon, now savages of the most debased type, are believed, on the reliable ground of their vocabulary, to be degenerate descendants of the tribes who brought Aryan civilization to the plains of Hindustan.⁴ "They make themselves understood," says Sir Emerson Tennent, "by signs, grimaces, and guttural sounds, which have little resemblance to definite

¹ Duke of Argyll's *Primeval Man*, p. 184. ² *Herod.*, iv. 108

³ *Pomp. Mel.*, ii. 1.

⁴ Rawlinson's *Origin of Nations*, p. 5.

words, or language in general." Yet of this race Max Müller writes: "More than half of the words used by them are mere corruptions of Sanscrit; their very name is the Sanscrit for hunter. If now they stand low in the scale of humanity, they once stood higher; nay, they may possibly prove in language, if not in blood, the distant cousins of Plato, and Newton, and Goethe."¹ The obliteration of Roman civilization in many parts of the empire, after the irruption of the barbarians, is an equally striking example of the lapse of nations from a higher to a lower culture.

It is easy to realize how the mere pressure of increasing numbers on the means of subsistence would drive weak tribes from hospitable to more and more wretched homes, where with security, except from each other, they would have to maintain such a struggle for existence as must infallibly involve their sinking into barbarism. The Eskimo at the north of the American continent, and the savages of Terra del Fuëgo in the far south, are illustrations; for what but dire necessity could have forced human beings to take up their abode in such terrible regions, if the warm and fertile landscapes of happier climates had been open to them? Even amidst Arctic regions, indeed, the feuds of tribes drive the weaker still farther north. Thus Admiral Osborne² informs us that a tribe wandering along the extreme northern edge of the Siberian coast had recently driven another tribe across the Frozen Sea to an island lying so far north that only its mountain tops could be occasionally seen from the Siberian headlands. "Terra del Fuego," says Mr. Darwin, "is a broken mass of wild rocks, lofty hills, and useless forests, and these are viewed through mists and

¹ *Chips*, vol. iv. p. 360.

² *Times*, December 30th, 1867.

endless storms. The habitable land is reduced to the stones of the beach. In search of food the people are compelled to wander unceasingly from spot to spot, and so steep is the coast that they can only move about in their wretched canoes.”¹ How could tribes in such a land, or those in the uttermost north, amidst eternal ice, be anything but degraded? But it cannot surely be said that they were created at first where we now find them, and it is hard to believe that they have not become greatly lower than their ancestors, who came from happier lands.

The supposed absence of any religion among some savage races has been assumed as a proof of the “utter barbarism” of primeval man. But surely if some men, as, for example, the late John Stuart Mill, can speak of themselves as without **any** religion, even amidst modern society, it is easy to understand how the gross mental darkness of long-continued savagery, struggling for the meanest existence, may efface or nearly efface all religious conceptions. It is, moreover, certain that religions are apt to decay as they grow old. “If there is one thing,” says Max Müller, “which a comparative study of religions places in the clearest light, it is the inevitable decay to which every religion is exposed.”² Nor is it at all a necessity that even if man were originally placed merely in the first step of ascending culture he might not have had lofty and pure though simple views of God and of his duty. The further we go back in history the clearer become the traces of some pure traditions and the rays of some primeval light.³

The fact that during the ages in which extreme bar-

¹ Darwin's *Voyage of a Naturalist*, p. 216.

² *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. p. xxiii.

³ *Primeval Man*, p. 190.

barism prevailed over Europe—and when the world at large seems to have been peopled mostly by tribes reduced to the deepest rudeness by constant wars, and by the savagery to which these led,—a civilization such as that of Egypt should have existed, seems, further, to imply the preservation on the banks of the Nile of an inheritance from an earlier period of culture and advancement. Archbishop Whately's argument that no tribe or people was ever civilized from within itself, but always by influences from without,¹ seem indisputable if applied to such utter degradation as Sir J. Lubbock assumes in the first men—a degradation leaving them hardly above the animals. Some Prometheus must surely in such a case have brought the Divine spark to them from heaven. But in Egypt we find, apparently as early as B.C. 3000²—that is, 5000 years ago—a civilization producing marvels of architecture which still remain unique. To raise a structure like the Great Pyramid, 746 feet square at the base, rising to a height of 450 feet, requiring the labour, for thirty years, of relays of men, numbering, in all, eleven millions!³—a structure, to present it in another way, covering a ground space of over twelve square acres, containing 90,000,000 cubic feet of masonry, and weighing, as is calculated, 6,316,000 tons,⁴—implies an earlier civilization of which it is the crowning triumph. This is still more certain when we find that it is truly square, the sides being equal and the angles right angles; that the four sockets in which the first four stones of the corners rest are exactly on the same level; that the directions of

¹ Whately's *Miscellaneous Essays. Lecture on Civilization.*

² Chabas gives the date of the Pyramids at B.C. 3300. Lepsius and Ebers at B.C. 3100, 3000.

³ *Herodotus*, ii. 124.

⁴ *English Cyclopædia*, art. Egypt.

the sides are accurately to the four cardinal points ; and that the vertical height of the pyramid bears the same proportion to its circumference at the base as the radius of a circle does to its circumference.¹ Nor are all these measures, angles, and levels merely in a degree accurate ; the best modern instruments can scarcely detect the very slightest error. The workmanship of the interior chambers, moreover, is not less wonderful, for the passages, and the chambers themselves, are lined with huge blocks of granite, polished to the highest degree, and fitted into each other with the utmost accuracy.² Such architecture surely points back not to "utter degradation," but to an inheritance of civilization presumably from beyond the Flood.

The distinguishing characteristics of the corn plants, such as oats, wheat, barley, rice, maize, etc., seem in the same way to point to a very different condition from "utter degradation," as that of our first parents. Like the fruit trees and many of the existing animals, they make their appearance on the earth along with man, and are entirely unknown in earlier ages. Moreover, while the primitive types of all our other esculent plants are still to be found in this or other countries, those of the corn plants are utterly unknown. Corn has never been met with except as a cultivated plant. It is found in the wrappings of Egyptian mummies, and in the charred remains of the Swiss Lake dwellings, but never apart from its cultivation by man. It cannot grow spontaneously, and is never, like other plants, self-sown and

¹ Professor Piazzzi Smyth's *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid*. Professor Smyth devoted many months to these measurements, etc., using the best instruments.

² Birks' *Egypt*, vol. i. p. 35. Wallace's *Tropical Nature*, etc., p. 299.

self-spread. If not cultivated, it soon disappears and grows extinct. It needs human labour to perpetuate it, and seems to have been given us by God as it is, to stimulate our industry and reward it.¹ If the ear be plucked off before ripening, a second growth rises from the roots the next year; but if it too be cut off, the plant gradually shrinks into a worthless grass, which not only cannot be improved again into grain, but is soon destroyed altogether by the more vigorous natural grasses. Given by God to our first parents, the grain plants secured a transcendent blessing for all their offspring, on condition of steady industry in their cultivation; but such a gift implies a condition far removed from Sir J. Lubbock's "utter degradation."

It is not necessary to suppose that man was created in any state of artificial luxury or refinement. The truest happiness is found not in an overwrought civilization, but in the simple plenty and contentment of a condition where our wants are still few and natural, and our intelligence and knowledge acute and sufficient, if not disciplined and profound.² The Ohio farmer, or the Swiss peasant, owning his land, free from any anxiety for the future, with every want of the body supplied, and nature, if not books, ever open to feed his mind, may enjoy life and be worthy of it, far more than if his lot had been cast in the midst of an artificial refinement. The soul, moreover, "that pillar of true dignity in man," is independent of outward circumstances for the grandeur of its hopes, contemplations, or spiritual life. The clear heaven of an innocent bosom is an element which, added to a very

¹ See *Bible Teachings in Nature*, p. 102. By Rev. Dr. Macmillan.

² See some thoughtful remarks in S. Baring Gould's *Heathenism and Mosaism*, p. 49.

simple outward condition, would make it a paradise; and that our first parents had. How much knowledge they had we cannot tell; but remembering the fact that the mere savage resembles the brute, inasmuch as he makes no improvements,¹ it is not too much to believe that they possessed the germs of much that needed only experience to develop into the arts and sciences of life and nature. If it be asked, in Fichte's words, "Who then educated the first pair?" his answer may also be given, "A spirit bestowed its care on them;" that is, they were gifted with intuitive knowledge, as far as needed, at their creation.

¹ Whately's *Origin of Civilization*, p. 34.

Zöcler's *Beziehungen zwischen Theologie und Naturwissenschaft*, vol. iii. p. 751.

On this subject and others connected with the Antiquity of Man, much interesting information will be found in *Fossil Men and their Modern Representatives*, by J. W. Dawson, LL.D., etc. London, 1880.





CHAPTER XII.

THE DESCENDANTS OF ADAM.

THE stay of man in Eden may have been longer or shorter, but from the first it could only have been conditional. Mere untried virtue does not deserve the name, nor can they be said to have a character, that is, a moral nature, who have not been tempted. Goodness is not a passive quality, but the deliberate preference of right to wrong; the resistance of evil and the manly assertion of its opposite. The innocence of childhood is only that of a simplicity to which as yet temptation is impossible; and of a nature so incomplete, that it has as yet no passions to resist. But with opening manhood there must come trial, for it bears the elements of it in its bosom. Our first parents, like ourselves, stood face to face with countless solicitations of the intellect and heart, however excited, and it remained to be seen whether they would subordinate them to the higher will of God, or weakly act in independence of Him. In either case, good and evil would alike have been learned; the good in the peace it brought, the evil as its hateful opposite; or the evil in the misery it involved and the good only as the peace for which we yearn. The latter was the choice; but sad as it has proved, it has had this mitigation, that the struggle towards the good that had

been lost is the source of all that is most noble. Better unspeakably, to have developed under the favour and in the friendship of Heaven; but still, even as it is, our fallen state is tempered by the discipline of struggle, intellectual and moral, to which we were henceforth committed.

Eden was no longer the place for man when he had lost that peace and joy of his higher nature which it had symbolized. It is impossible to fancy what is meant by the Tree of Life. Like the fabled tree of the Persians, or like that of India, it may have yielded the food and drink of immortality,¹ or it may only have been a symbol of the great truth, that spiritual life is to be sought by us, not from within, through our own faculties or powers, but from without, at the hands of God.² In any case man had separated himself from his Creator, and he must needs be made to realize it by leaving a scene identified with the Divine presence.

But though he was punished for his transgression, our first parent was not cursed. Mysterious beings, in long after times the appointed guardians of the mercy seat³ in the Tabernacle and in the Temple, with flaming sword, were set to keep the way of the Tree of Life. What this can mean it is impossible to understand, for we know nothing by which to illustrate it. The symbolical creatures to whom the name cherubim is given in Scripture throw no light on it, for we can never argue from a symbol as if it were a reality.

Their presence, however, hints at least at the yearning of man for immortality, and is in keeping with the great promise with which Scripture closes, that those found

¹ Rosenmüller's *Das A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 9.

² Bishop Harold Browne, in *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i. p. 40.

³ Exod. xxv 17-22

worthy shall have right to the Tree of Life, in the midst of the better Paradise of the City of God.¹ The Jews of Christ's day, indeed, fondly cherished this hope. "And it is permitted no single mortal," says the Book of Enoch, "to touch this tree of sweetest fragrance till the time of the Great Judgment; but when everything shall be reconciled and made perfect for ever, it will be given over to the righteous and lowly."²

Is it idle to think that the flaming splendour was more than a mere barrier to man's approach, especially when the cherubim, who are always connected with ideas of the presence of God, are introduced along with it? They over-arched the mercy seat with their wings; they are represented as bearing up the throne of God.³ Was not the brightness, darting, in this case, its sword-like rays on every side,—the symbol of the presence of God; like the light which shone from the cloud, on the camp of Israel in the wilderness? May it not have marked the first sanctuary of our fallen race? May not Cain have alluded to it when he went out from "the presence of Jehovah?"⁴ May not our first parents, in their penitence, have cried out before it like the Psalmist of later days, "O Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth!"⁵

The first children born to Adam were to bear sad proof of the ruin which sin had brought on mankind. Cain, the first-born, was thought a great gift from God when he came; a "possession" to be cherished with all a

¹ Rev. xxii. 14.

² *Das Buch Henoch*, Kap. xxv. 4.

³ Ezek. ix. 3; x. 4, 18, Ps. xviii. 10.

⁴ Gen. iv. 16.

⁵ Ps. lxxx. 1. See McGavin's *Scripture Characters Illustrated*, p. 16.

mother's love. But his name had the double meaning of "a spear" as well, and sorely was it to pierce her! ¹

Abel, his brother, ■ name, in Accadian, meaning "a son," "a child," born after a time, had that name fitly rendered in a Hebrew sense, whether in prospect, or afterward; for his brief day and sad end were to show that life is only "vanity," and its joy at best "a breath." When the first child came, Eve had a living miracle before her, which seemed to promise her as much future comfort as it gave her present delight. "She had gotten a man from Jehovah;" she had something to wean her mind from her great sorrow; something to love, watch over, and weary herself in fond endearments towards. But the bright morning was to be overclouded ere noon.

After a time, we are told, when the two had grown to be men, they chose their callings in life—Cain turning to agriculture; Abel to the simple pursuits of a pastoral life. No interval of "utter degeneracy" is sanctioned in the Scripture account of the first men; no dismal age of living on roots and shell fish, or the produce of the chase, as naked savages; they begin in Eden, to work it and watch it;² after the Fall they turn to the tillage of the field, and the rearing and tending of sheep;³ occupations from which an advance to other forms of civilization was easy.

The two brothers, as often happens, grew up with very different natures: the elder, a sullen, self-willed, haughty, vindictive man; wanting the religious element in his character, and defiant even in his attitude towards God.

¹ The word *qin* in Accadian means a "possession;" but also a "slave." Lenormant, *Lettres Assyriologiques*, vol. ii. pp. 15, 16.

² Gen. ii. 15. (Heb.)

³ The word translated sheep, Gen. iv. 2, includes also goats that is "the smaller cattle."

Abel, it is implied, was the very reverse; the life he led, tending meek flocks, a type of his own character. Such opposite natures—pride and humility, fierceness and meekness, could hardly live well together, for the good of the one must have seemed a constant reproach to the other.

Long brooding jealousy and dislike at last broke out into a flame, only too fatally. After a time,—literally, after days, perhaps on the Sabbath, or on the first day of the year, the brothers brought, it may be to “The presence of the Lord” between the cherubim,¹ their offerings to Jehovah; the one, perchance, to thank Him for His blessing on field and flocks; the other in grateful acknowledgment of the fruits of harvest. Cain presented, as was common in later times, an offering of the growth and fruits of his land; Abel, of the first-born of his flocks, and of the fat,—which, in after ages also, was specially esteemed in sacrifices. No altar is mentioned, but one is necessarily implied. Cain however and his offering, found no favour with God, while Abel and his were accepted, perhaps by fire descending on it from heaven. The state of heart in each towards God determined the result. Abel had loving faith² in God and His promise of mercy, and it is to be presumed that Cain had not; for instead of lowly sorrow at his rejection, there burned in him the fiercest bitterness and indignation, so that “his countenance fell.” “Why art thou wroth?” whispered God into his soul, as He does so often to us all, “and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well is not gladness (of countenance) thine? If with heart and deed thou seekest what is good, thou wilt have joy; but if thou doest evil,—not only hast thou sadness; sin lies crouch-

¹ See McGavin's *Scripture Characters*, p. 22.

² Heb. xi. 4.

ing, like a wild beast, at the door, to spring on thee and master thee, who shouldst master it.”¹ But the proud heart kept its grudge sullenly, and, in a fit of passion, soon after embued the hands of the unhappy one in his brother’s blood.

Some of the legends of the death of Abel are very touching. One day, says one of them, he was asleep on a mountain, and Cain took a stone and crushed his head. Then he threw the corpse on his back, and carried it about, not knowing what to do with it; but he saw two crows fighting, and one killed the other, on which the crow that lived dug a hole in the earth with his beak, and buried the dead bird. But Cain said, “I shall learn sense from this bird; I, too, will bury my brother in the ground.” And he did so. “After Abel was slain,” says another, “the dog which had kept his sheep guarded his body, and Adam and Eve sat beside it and knew not what to do. Then said a raven, whose friend was dead, ‘I will teach Adam a lesson,’ and he dug a hole in the soil, and laid his friend there, and covered him up. And when Adam saw it, he said to Eve, ‘We will do the same with Abel,’ and God rewarded the raven for this, by promising that none should ever injure its young, that it should always have meat in abundance,

¹ Dillmann’s and Ewald’s Translations. See also *Ges. Thes.*, 714, p. 1259. Kamphausen (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1860, p. 120) paraphrases the passage as follows: “God thinks nothing of the outward worth of the gift, whether you bring what you think better than you have now offered, or present only thy field-fruits which you wrongly think have caused your rejection by their not being acceptable. God looks only at the heart. Guide thyself by this in the future. But your heart, as your conscience tells you, is already so corrupt, that sin like a fierce beast threatens presently to destroy thee altogether.” See Lenormant’s *Origines*, p. 169.

and that its prayer for rain should be immediately answered.”¹

Nothing could mark more vividly the progress of evil in the human heart than Cain’s bearing after his crime, of which banishment from the home of Adam was the punishment. The land of Nod, to which he directed his steps, has been thought to be some remote eastern part of Asia, but even this is simply conjecture. The most we know is that it was on the east of Eden. Thither he carried with him a sign by which he should feel himself safe from the avenger of blood, but what it was we cannot tell. Some say that his tongue turned white, others that he had a particular dress assigned him; some that his face grew black; but others that he became covered with hair and that a horn grew out of his forehead. “The Holy One took one of the twenty-two letters which are in the law,” says Rabbi Johanan, “and wrote it on the arm of Cain.” Another Rabbi, however, puts it more touchingly, that the sign was a symbol of pardon set by God on his brow, after his deep penitence and contrition. Gesenius, less imaginatively, but more practically, translates it simply, that “God gave him a sign.”²

The expulsion from Eden was already an event so distant, that children born to Adam, or, perhaps, even to his children, had grown into manhood, and a community had gradually been formed. A band from this fled with the banished one to Nod, the land of “exile,” and there the insecurity of their position led to the first gathering into town life; which was now the more necessary, since the ground had been cursed as regarded Cain, and he had been doomed to be a wanderer and a fugitive in the earth. He hoped, it may be, to mitigate his lot by the

¹ *Pirke R. Eliezer*, c. xxi. *Koran*, cap. v. ² *Thesaurus*, p. 119.

fixity and protection of a central settlement. Poets have described the first city as vying with the glories of Babylon or Nineveh, but it is far more likely that a very lowly ideal would be nearer the truth. Macaulay¹ imagines it to have been very magnificent.

From all its threescore gates the light
Of gold and steel afar were thrown;
Two hundred cubits rose, in height,
The outer wall of polished stone.
On the top was ample space
For a gallant chariot race.
Near either parapet a bed
Of the richest mould was spread.

Where, amidst flowers of every scent and hue,
Rich orange trees, and palms, and giant cedars grew.

Menials and guards; marble cisterns foaming with wine at great feasts; troops of dancing girls; chosen captains arrayed in glittering panoply, and all the splendour of a magnificent court, with armies, slaves, painted galleys, and the thousand wondrous details of Oriental greatness exalt the glory of its builder. At the marriage of his daughter Ahirad with the eldest born son of Seth, the royal halls display an—

—endless avenue of light,
The bowers of tulip, rose, and palm,
The thousand cressets fed with balm,
The silken vests, the boards piled high
With amber, gold, and ivory;
The crystal fount, whence sparkling flow
The richest wines o'er beds of snow,
The walls where blaze in living dyes
The king's three hundred victories.

* * * *

With naked swords and shields of gold,
Stood the seven princes of the tribes of Nod;

¹ *The Marriage of Tirzah and Ahirad.*

Upon an ermine carpet lay
 Two tiger cubs in furious play,
 Beneath the emerald throne where sat the signed of God.¹

But this, doubtless, is mere poetical license. It is much more likely that "the city" was simply an aggregate of huts or tents, strengthened against attack from wild beasts by a rude stockade.²

A few names and one or two isolated and brief notices comprise all we really know of Cain and his descendants. Scripture had for its object to trace the development of the kingdom of God; not the history of outside nations. But the little recorded speaks of a condition far removed from the "degradation" which some scientific men have assumed as that of the first man. Instead of burrowing in the ground, or living in hollow trees or caves, and sustaining themselves on the meanest subsistence, Cain's tilling the ground implies the use of corn and other cultivated plants; while Abel's sacrifice, and offering the fat as the selected portion, hints at the rest being taken as food; for the remains of sacrifices have in all ages been consumed by the offerers. Jewish and Mohammedan legends alike, refer the gift of the corn plants to the pity of God on Adam's repentance; Gabriel, it is said, having been sent to him with wheat from Paradise, and having taught him how to sow and reap it and make bread.³ He showed him besides, continues the legend, how to slay a lamb in the name of God, to shear off the wool and skin the carcass, and then instructed Eve to spin and weave the wool.

It may be that the legend of Cain's repentance finds

¹ The "sign" Macaulay paints as a "fierce and blood-red light," like a star, which blazed on Cain's "ample forehead white."

² Ges., *Thes.*, p. 1005.

³ Baring Gould's *Old Testament Legends*, vol. i. p. 56.

corroboration in the name of his first-born son Enoch, or Hanoch, which comes from two roots, "to teach," and "to consecrate." Perhaps the unhappy man, like many an ungodly parent since, wished that, whatever he was himself, his son at least should be religious. It may be that he "consecrated" him to the God against whom he himself had so grievously sinned. But, on the other hand, the name may simply refer to Hanoch's being the first to teach men the culture of city life, or the elements of physical knowledge. Irad,¹ "the swift one," who comes next, points perhaps to a hunter's life. Mehujael, "the stricken of God," hints darkly at further judgments for deepening corruption; but Methusael, in strong contrast, brings before us one who could be known as the "Champion of El;" as if, even among the race of Cain, God had not left Himself without a witness. But with Lamech, "the striker down," "the wild man," the gleam of light once more fades; as even in those days the grace seen in the father too often disappears in the child. A new floodgate of evil is now opened, for with Lamech begins polygamy. One wife had been created for Adam, and, hitherto, had been the rule; but "the wild man" takes two, and thus introduces a usage which, more than any other, corrupts society where it prevails. That it should have been thus ascribed to the race of Cain is significant; for though it afterwards existed in Israel, it was always the exception. The law permitted, but did not favour it; and even kings were forbidden to have many wives.² Lamech's family history gives us a momentary glimpse into these long dead ages. His one wife, Adah, shows in her name that "beauty" had already asserted its power; but that of his other wife, Zillah, seems to hint at the light from Eden having still lingered in a measure

¹ Yirad, Gen. iv. 14.

² Deut. xvii. 17.

even in Nod, for it appears to mean that her "shade" or protector is none other than God. Such a shade was, indeed, sorely needed in those days of deepening evil, and it may be she sought it even amidst such an ungodly race.

Abel had already kept flocks, but only of sheep and goats, and had tended them in the pastures around his father's dwelling. But now, a son of Adah, Jabal,—“the wanderer”—took to a purely pastoral life; which involved his passing from place to place with his herds of cattle, and it may be of asses and camels. Among these he necessarily had to live, and hence arose the moveable tent, which nomads have used ever since. Her second son—Jubal, “the player,”—his very name an imitation of the lingering sound of his notes,—added to the charms of life the wondrous power of music; learned, perhaps in the quiet shepherd life his brother had begun. “He was the father,” says the record, “of all such as use the lyre and the pipe.” The sweet vibrations of stringed instruments and the soft tones of the flute, in its earliest simplicity, must thus have waked delight in the very first generations of men. But Zillah, also, had a son; one, possibly of many; whose gifts to the race, if in one light of priceless value; in their abuse were to be the symbol of immeasurable evil. Tubal-Cain, “the smith,” was “a sharpener or hammerer out¹ of all cutting instruments of copper and iron;” the coulter of the plough, it may be, on the one hand, but on the other, the sword and spear. It is in keeping with the first mention of deadly weapons that their worst use is noticed as presently boasted. Armed by his son's invention, Lamech “the wild man,” the picture of a violent and darkening age, and the pitiless hero of the revengeful of after days, in

¹ Ges., *Thees.*, p. 530.

his joy at his new weapons, cries aloud to his wives, in words which seem to have come down to us as a fragment of ancient song—

Ada and Zillah!¹ hear my speech,
Ye wives of Lamech, mark my words:
I have killed a man in return for a blow;
A young man, in return for a stroke;
Cain, they say, if killed, was to be revenged seven times,
But Lamech-(as this may show) will be revenged seventy
times seven.²

The curtain falls on the race of Cain with this picture of savage ferocity, glorying in revenge, and merciless in its fury. What nations sprang from this earliest separation of the human family is not told us; for there is no hint, even in the names of Cain's descendants that have survived.

Scripture was more concerned with the story of another branch of the great stream of life; that of the race of Seth, whose name appears as that of a third son of Adam. His name, "the replacer," speaks of the joy of Eve at the birth of another child, in the room of the gentle Abel; and she had the still greater joy to find that he grew up to inherit Abel's spirit. In due time he himself had a son,

¹ Condemnation of revenge and also of polygamy is the moral lesson of this snatch of fierce song. Adam has one wife; this descendant of Cain introduces the custom of having more than one, and that, fitly, on the eve of the Deluge. There is here a formal condemnation of this sin, just as in Gen. ii. 24, a Divine sanction is given to monogamy.

² See Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 382. I have paraphrased rather than closely translated the words. Gesenius (*Thes.*) translates it, "I have killed a man on account of a wound inflicted on me, a young man for the blow (he gave me)." S. de Sacy's version is, "I have slain a man because he had wounded me, and a young man because he had bruised me."

Enosh, "a man," who was destined to mark a permanent and mighty advance in the future religious history of the world. Eve had spoken of God as Elohim; with Enosh men began to worship him as Jehovah.¹ Cain and Abel had worshipped with offerings and sacrifices; perhaps in some rude sanctuary, outside the door of which sin still crouched, in secret, to spring on them again. Enosh introduces public supplication; for we can scarcely doubt that men had already called upon God in private. The form was now, once again, quickened by the spirit of religion, which was henceforth owned as not only a ceremonial act, but an inner life.

The descendants of Adam through Seth are given in ten generations; but when we remember that, in the genealogies of our Lord, St. Matthew reckons only twenty-eight steps from David to the Incarnation, while St. Luke gives us forty-three, it is easy to fancy that many may have been omitted in this case also. To Enosh, we are told, was born Cainan, "my child;" to Cainan, Mahalaleel, "El (God) in His glory;" to him, Jared,² perhaps "the swift one;" to him, again, Enoch, the same name as that of a son of Cain; but in this case "the teacher," "the consecrated one," in a worthy sense; for while tradition ascribes to him the instruction of mankind in human science, Scripture speaks of him as so exceptionally holy, that, like Elijah afterwards, he was spared the pains of death, and taken while still alive, to God. Like Abel he died early, for shortness of life is far from marking Divine displeasure. "He was not found," says the sacred

¹ Gen. iv. 26. See *Speaker's Bible*; *Tuch*; *Knobel*; *Hupfeld*; *Oehler*; *Delitzsch*; *Hofmann*. The word translated "the Lord" in our A. V. is always "Jehovah" in the Hebrew.

² Jared is different in spelling from Irad the grandson of Cain, but they seem to come from the same root.

writer, "because God had translated him;" words which evidently imply a belief in our immortality, at least among the race of Seth, from the very first.¹

If Enoch's life was shorter than that of any other patriarch, the blessing on the household of the righteous was abundantly illustrated in Methuselah, who is recorded as having lived 969 years. Whether we are to think that the original vitality of the human frame faded only by slow degrees; or whether there was something salubrious in the air of the ages after Eden, has often been asked, but can never be answered. Some have fancied that the immense lives ascribed to the antediluvians imply that each name represents a tribe, the lives of whose leading members are added together; others have understood the years to mean only months; while others have sought to prove that from Adam to Abraham the year had no more than three months, from Abraham to Joseph eight, and from Joseph's time twelve months, as at present.² But such explanations have no sufficient warrant, and it is perhaps best, on the whole, to keep in mind what Bishop Harold Browne has pointed out; that "numbers and dates are liable in the course of ages to become obscured and exaggerated."³ It is quite possible that some of the early Rabbis, desirous of emulating the fabled age ascribed by heathen nations to their heroes and demigods, may have added to the Bible figures, so as to secure the patriarchs an equal honour. Our present bodies, certainly, could not live

¹ The Book of Enoch, from which I have elsewhere quoted freely, is sufficient proof of the superstitious reverence in which the great patriarch's name was held even by the later Jews.

² Von Bohlen's *Die Genesis*, pp. 65-67. *Aids to Faith*, p. 270. Kalisch, *On Genesis*, p. 110. Knobel, *Die Genesis*, p. 69.

³ *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i. p. 62.

more than two hundred years, at the very most, from the decay of one part after another, and hence we must either take Bishop Browne's solution of antediluvian longevity, or suppose that exceptional circumstances in the first ages produced exceptional results.

Methusaleh, "the man of the spear" or "of the bow," a strange name for the son of the heavenly minded Enoch, is followed by a second Lamech; but whether his name, "the wild man," or "the plunderer," throws any light on his character and life is not told us. All we know is, that from him sprang one who was to find favour with God in the midst of a world from which good had well-nigh departed. It is, indeed, perhaps to this well-nigh universal corruption that Methuselah and Lamech owe their names. It was a sad time. The earth, cursed by God, bore its harvests, as now, only after weary toil. The almost spontaneous fruitfulness of Eden had been lost, and Lamech might well look forward to the help to be rendered by his newborn son Noah, as "a comfort" to him, in lightening his toil. Little, however, did he dream what that son should see ere he died! ¹

¹ It is very curious to notice how widely the number ten prevails as that of the first generations of men. The Bible reckons ten from Creation to the Flood. The Iranians had ten kings, "the men of the ancient law" who lived on the pure homa or immortal draught of the gods, and kept their purity. Among the Hindoos there are ten "Fathers," the children of Brahma. Among the Germans and Scandinavians there were ten ancestors of Odin. Among the Chinese, ten emperors shared divine honour before the dawn of history, and the Arabs have ten fabled kings of the region between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. *

The similarity in the two lists of the first generations of men through Adam by Cain on the one side, and through Seth by

* Lenormant, *Manuel d'Histoire Ancienne*, vol. i. p. 19. *Contemp. Rev.* (April 1880), p. 570.

Enos on the other, has often attracted attention. They stand as follows :

THROUGH ADAM.

Adam = The man.
 Qain (Cain).
 Hanoch (Enoch).
 Yirad (Irada).
 Me'huiaël (Mehujael).
 Methushaël (Methusael).
 Lemech (Lamech).
 Yabal. Yubal. Thubal.
 (Jabal). (Jubal). (Tubal).

THROUGH ENOS.

Enos = The man.
 Qenau (Cainan).
 Mahalaleel.
 Yered (Jared).
 Hanoch (Enoch).
 Methushela'h (Methuselah).
 Lemech (Lamech).
 Noah.
 Shem. Ham. Yapheth (Japheth).

Lenormant points out that these names have an entirely different meaning in the two lists: an unfavourable one in that through Cain; a favourable one in that through Seth. Thus Me'huiael is, he says, "smitten of God," and corresponds to Mahalaleel, "praise or splendour of God." Yirad, the "fugitive," is the counterpart of Yered, "descent," or rather "service." Hanoch means, in both lists, "initiator," "teacher," but in the one list it is initiator into material and profane arts; in the other, into religious truth and spiritual life.—*Contemporary Review* (April 1880), p. 567.

In his *Origines de l'Histoire*, Lenormant finds in the name of the Assyrian month Sivan—the month of bricks—and the fact that its zodiacal sign is The Twins, a reminiscence of Cain's fratricide, and of the founding of the first city. Phenician tradition speaks of the first men as having invented bricks mixed with chopped straw, and dried in the sun. M. Lenormant collects a striking list of cities in antiquity, with the founding of which the murder of a brother is associated. He thinks Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's accepted because the latter was a sacrifice; the other only an offering. The word "Robetz" = lieth (Gen. iv. 7), he tells us, is related to the Assyrian "Rabitz," a class of demons who hide and spring on their victim. Evil spirits were imagined as often lying hidden at the door of a house, ready to leap on a man when he came out unsuspectingly. See pp. 140–171.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE FLOOD.

IT is one of the most remarkable, and at the same time pleasing, corroborations of the early narratives of Scripture, that they are found to be repeated, in substance, often with surprising exactness of detail, by the traditions and primitive records of the most widely separate countries and races. This is especially seen in the echoes of the story of the Flood, which meet us from every age and region.

The notice of this appalling and unique catastrophe, which has thus imprinted itself on the memory of the world from the most ancient times, is fitly introduced by a statement of the condition of things among mankind, which drew down such an awful punishment. Evil had grown rampant, and threatened utterly to extirpate good from the world. The immediate cause of this portentous corruption is, moreover, stated; though in language so dark, from its metaphorical expression, that endless controversy has risen as to the meaning of some essential words. "There were giants on the earth," it is said, "in those days;" but the name means only "famous" men, whether for stature or deeds, though they may have been of unusual size. Some races, especially when the enervating influences of an artificial civilization have not

deteriorated them, have shown this peculiarity in historic times ; as for example the Cimbri and Teutons of antiquity, and the Pomeranians of the present day. It is added that "the sons of God" allied themselves with "the daughters of men," and that their children became mighty and renowned men.¹ By the "giants," or "nephilim," seem to be meant a race of violent chiefs, who made themselves great names by deeds of war, filling the earth with violence. They may have been of gigantic size, like those to whom the same name is afterwards applied in Palestine,² but it is not necessarily implied.³ Opinions have differed greatly as to the meaning of the name "Sons of God," or rather, of "Elohim." The Rabbis, as was natural, from their love of the marvellous, took for granted that the fallen angels are meant; since "nephilim" is derived from the verb "to fall." Hence Apocryphal Jewish literature assumes this constantly, while not a few writers of the most opposite schools still support this explanation, which, nevertheless, seems fanciful and ungrounded. The giants are not said to have been "the sons of Elohim," and their name may as fitly be explained as referring to their "falling upon" their fellow men, as by any mysterious connection with

¹ Gen. vi. 4.

² Deut. ii. 10 ff., 20; iii. 11. Amos ii. 9; etc.

³ It has been suggested, by Movers and others, including even a writer in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, that the application of the same name to a race in Palestine, argues that they were descendants from the "giants" of Gen. vi. But, as Ewald rightly notes, it is not their historical name, but one simply pointing out a physical characteristic, not confined to any one people. If we were to call the Patagonians "giants," it surely would not make them descendants of those so-called in Genesis. There is hence no proof from this, as has been fancied, that others besides Noah and his family survived the Flood.

the rebel angels. Nor does the name "sons of Elohim," necessarily refer to angels at all; for the word Elohim is used, elsewhere, in Scripture, of men. Thus, in Psalm lxxxii. 1, we read that God "judges in the midst of the Elohim," who are shown in the next verse to be those who "judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked."¹ The name is evidently given them from their office; in which they represented, in Israel, the supreme judge of the nation—Jehovah. Jewish interpreters generally adopt this meaning of the passage; believing that the "great" or "mighty" sons of Cain are contrasted with the lowlier daughters of Seth.² It is, moreover, very doubtful if the word be ever applied in the Old Testament to angels.³ On the other hand, it is continually used of heathen idols, and hence it may well point in this particular case to intermarriages between the adherents of idolatry⁴ and the daughters of the race of Seth, and a consequent spread of heathenism, far and

¹ Elohim is applied to judges in 1 Sam. ii. 25. Bunsen, *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 52, repudiates the idea of angels being intended by the "sons of God," as not in any measure an Asiatic, far less a Hebrew conception. It is, he says, simply a piece of Greek Polytheism. Lord Macaulay, in his poem, *The Marriage of Tirzah and Ahirad*, has the same idea as Hirsch. See next page.

² Ruetschi, in *Herzog*, vol. xiii. p. 40.

³ See the word, in 8th edition of Gesenius' *Lexicon*, 1878.

⁴ The use of "son" for "disciple," or "worshipper" is common in Scripture. Thus, "the sons of the prophets." The Jews are often called "the sons of God," Isaiah i. 2; xliii. 6. Jer. iii. 14, 19. It was the same with other nations. Benhadad means the son or worshipper of Hadad or Adod, the chief divinity of the Syrians. The disciples of the Magi in Persia were called their "sons," and the same usage was common among the Greeks. The Syrians also spoke of the sons, or disciples, of Bardesanes. The godly are called in Malachi ii. 15, the children, or seed of Elohim.

near, with its attendant violence and moral debasement.¹ If, however, by "the sons of Elohim" we understand the worshippers of Jehovah, the "daughters of men" would mean those of the race of Cain. This interpretation, indeed, is now very generally adopted, and seems the most natural. We should, then, read, "the sons of the godly race" took wives of "the daughters of men."²

The children of such marriages sadly increased the prevailing corruption. They became "*gibborim*," or fierce and cruel chiefs, filling the world with blood and tumult.³ It was to prevent the final triumph of evil, Scripture tells us, that the Deluge was sent from God.

That such a terrible and all-destructive visitation happened, is corroborated, as has been said, by the traditions of all races. Among these the most famous, perhaps, are the Chaldean, which are preserved in fragments of Berosus, a priest of Babylon, who lived about two hundred and sixty years before Christ;⁴ and also on the tablets recovered from the ruins of Nineveh.

The account of Berosus is, briefly, as follows: "The great Deluge took place under Xisuthros. The god Ea appeared to him in a dream, and announced that on the

¹ See Schenkel, in *Bibel Lexicon*, art. Nephilim.

² Hirsch, *Der Pentateuch*, vol. i. p. 121.

³ Hirsch's explanation of "My Spirit shall not always strive with men," etc. is worth notice. He translates it, "My Spirit shall not always judge in man." That is, Conscience, which is, as Hirsch puts it, the breath of God, will more and more lose its power in the earth. Evil will more and more prevail, because men are only flesh, now—that is, corrupt. Yet I shall delay my wrath for 120 years. *Der Pentateuch*, on the verse.

⁴ Brockhaus' *Lexicon*, art. Berosus. Bunsen in his *Bibel Urkunden*, quotes the passages in full, from Eusebius and Syncellus. They are given at length, also, by Lenormant, in his *Essay on the Deluge*.

15th of the month of Daisios (a little before the summer solstice), all men should perish by a flood. He was therefore to collect all that was consigned to writing, and bury it at Sippara—the city of the Sun. There, he was to build a vessel and to enter into it with his family and dearest friends; and he was to cause animals, birds and quadrupeds, to enter with him, taking sufficient provision. He was, moreover, to prepare everything for navigation. And when Xisuthros asked in what direction he should steer, he was told—towards the gods—and enjoined to pray that good might come of it for men.

“Xisuthros, on this, obeyed, and constructed a vessel five stadia long (3,033 feet 9 inches) and two broad (1,213 feet 6 inches); and having brought together all that had been ordered, went into it with his wife, his children, and his intimate friends.

“The Deluge having come, and soon going down, Xisuthros loosed some of the birds; but these, finding no food, nor place to alight, returned to the ship. A few days later he again set them free, but they returned, their feet stained with mud. Sent off a third time, they never came back. Xisuthros from this understood that the earth was bare, and having made an opening in the roof of the ship, saw that it had grounded on the top of a mountain. He then descended with his wife, his daughter, and his pilot, and having worshipped the earth, raised an altar and sacrificed to the gods. At the same moment he vanished, with those who accompanied him.

“Meanwhile, those who had remained in the vessel, finding he did not return, descended and began to seek him, calling him by name. But they saw Xisuthros no more. A voice from heaven, however, was heard, commanding that they should be pious towards the gods,

and telling them that he had received the reward of his piety, by being carried away to dwell henceforth in the midst of the gods, and that his wife, his daughter, and the pilot of the ship, shared the same honour. The voice further said that they were to return to Babylon, and dig up the writings buried at Sippara; to transmit them to after generations. The country in which they found themselves was Armenia. They, then, having heard the voice, sacrificed to the gods and returned on foot to Babylon. Of the vessel of Xisuthros, a portion is still to be found in the Gordyan Mountains in Armenia, and pilgrims bring thence asphalt which they have scraped from its fragments. It is used to keep off the influence of witchcraft."

Thus far Berosus. The version given by the cuneiform tablets is fuller. The story is related by the patriarch Khasisatra, who has been saved from the deluge, to Izdhubar, a hero, who, having been smitten with leprosy, goes to the distant land to which the gods have transported Khasisatra, to consult him as to a cure. There are three copies of the tablets on which the legend is given, all made by order of the same king of Assyria, Assurbanipal, in the seventh century B.C., from a very ancient original in the priestly library of Erech; a town founded in the early days of the first Chaldean empire. This venerable copy could not have been of later date than seventeen centuries B.C., but probably was older; so that it carries us back beyond the time of Moses, perhaps even to Abraham's day. Nor is this all, for the variations in the three existing copies prove that the one from which they were transcribed had itself been taken from a still older manuscript, of which the original text had received interlinear comments. Some of the copyists have introduced these into the

text: others have omitted them, and the narrative is thus carried back to an age which may well be believed contemporary with the survivors of the Flood itself, so that it is thus one of the oldest documents as yet known. Lenormant's translation, which embodies the latest advances of cuneiform philology, is as follows:—

“I will reveal to thee, O Izdhubar, the history of my preservation, and tell thee the decision of the gods. The town of Shurippak, which thou knowest, is on the Euphrates. It was ancient, and in it [men did not honour] the gods. I alone was a servant of the great gods. [The gods took counsel on the appeal of] Anu:—[a deluge was proposed by] Bel [and approved by Nabon, Nergal, and] Adar.

“And the God [Ea] the immutable lord—repeated this command in a dream. . . . ‘Man of Shurippak—build a vessel and finish it [quickly]. I will destroy life and substance [by a deluge]. Cause thou to go up into the vessel the substance of all that has life. The vessel thou shalt build—600 cubits shall be the measure of its length, and 60 the measure of its breadth and of its height. [Launch it] thus on the ocean, and cover it with a roof.’ I understood, and said to Ea, ‘My lord, [the vessel] that thou commandest me to build thus, when I shall build it, young and old [shall laugh at me]. [Ea opened his mouth and] spoke; ‘[If they laugh at thee] thou shalt say to them, He who has insulted me [shall be punished], [for the protection of the gods] is over me.’ ‘I will exercise my judgment on that which is on high and that which is below. . . . Close the vessel. . . . Enter into it and draw the door of the ship toward thee. Within it, thy grain, thy furniture, thy provisions, thy riches, thy menservants, thy maidservants, and thy young people—the cattle of

the field, and the wild beasts of the plain, which I will assemble and send to thee, shall be kept behind thy door.' . . . On the fifth day [the two sides of the bark] were raised. The rafters in its covering were, in all, fourteen. I placed its roof and I covered it. I embarked in it on the sixth day; I divided its floors on the seventh, I divided the interior compartments on the eighth. I stopped up the chinks through which the water entered in. I poured on the outside three times 3,600 measures of asphalte; and three times 3,600 measures of asphalte within. Three times 3,600 men, porters, brought on their heads the chests of provisions. I kept 3,600 chests for the nourishment of my family, and the mariners divided among them twice 3,600 chests. For [provisioning] I had oxen slain; I appointed rations for each day. In [anticipation of the need of] drinks, of barrels and of wine, [I collected in quantity] like to the waters of a river; [of provisions] in quantity like to the dust of the earth. . . .

"All that I possessed I gathered together—of silver, of gold; of the substance of life of every kind. I made my servants, male and female, the cattle of the fields, the wild beasts of the plains, and the sons of the people, all ascend[into the ship].

"Shamas [the sun] fixed the moment, and he announced it in these terms: 'In the evening I will cause it to rain abundantly from heaven; enter into the vessel and close the door.' . . . When the evening of the day arrived I was afraid—I entered into my vessel and shut my door, and then confided to the pilot this dwelling, with all that it contained.

"Mu-sheri-ina-namari¹ rose from the foundations of heaven in a black cloud; Ramman² thundered in the

¹ A personification of rain.

² The god of thunder.

midst of the cloud—Nabon and Shurru marched before—they marched, devastating the mountain and the plain. Nergal,¹ the powerful, dragged chastisements after him. Adar² advanced, overthrowing before him. The archangels of the abyss brought destruction. By their terrors they agitated the earth. The flood of Raman swelled up to the sky, and [the earth], grown dark, became like a desert.

“They destroyed the living beings on the surface of the earth. The terrible Deluge swelled up towards heaven. The brother no longer saw his brother: men no longer knew each other. In heaven the gods became afraid of the waterspouts, and sought a refuge—they mounted up to the heaven of Anu.³ The gods were stretched out motionless, pressing one against another, like dogs. Ishtar wailed like a child: the great goddess pronounced this discourse: ‘Here is mankind returned into earth: and theirs is the misfortune I have announced in presence of the gods.’ . . . ‘I am the mother who gave birth to men, and there they are, filling the sea like the race of fishes; and the gods on their seats, by reason of that which the archangels of the abyss are doing, weep with me.’ The gods on their seats were in tears, and held their lips closed, [revolving] things to come.

“Six days passed and as many nights: the wind, the waterspout and the deluge-rain were in all their strength. At the approach of the seventh day the deluge-rain grew weaker—the terrible waterspout, which had been awful as an earthquake, grew calm, the sea began to dry up, and the wind and the waterspout came to an end. I

¹ The god of war and of death.

² The Chaldee and Assyrian Hercules.

³ The upper heaven of the fixed stars.

looked at the sea, attentively observing, and the whole race of men had returned to earth; the corpses floated like seaweed. I opened the window and the light smote on my face. I was seized with sadness; I sat down and wept, and the tears came over my face.

“I looked at the regions bounding the sea, towards the twelve points of the horizon, but there was no land. The vessel was borne above the land of Nizir—the mountains of Nizir arrested the vessel, and did not permit it to pass over. For six days they thus stopped it. At the approach of the seventh day I sent out and loosed a dove. The dove went, turned, and found no place



NOAH IN THE ARK, WITH MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES (THE GODS BY WHOM THE FLOOD HAD BEEN SENT?) FROM AN EARLY BABYLONIAN CYLINDER.

to light on, and came back. I sent out and loosed a swallow; and it went, turned, and finding no place to light on, came back. I sent out and loosed a raven; the raven went, and saw the corpses on the waters; it ate, rested, turned, and came not back.

“I then sent out [the creatures in the vessel] towards the four winds, and offered a sacrifice. I raised the pile of my burnt-offering on the peak of the mountain. Seven by seven I laid the measured vessels,¹ and, beneath, I spread rushes, cedar-wood, and juniper. The gods were seized with the desire of it—with a bene-

¹ Vessels or vases with measured contents, for the offering.

volent desire of it :—they assembled like flies above the master of the sacrifice. From afar, in approaching, the great goddess raised the great zones that Anu made for the glory of the gods.¹ These gods, luminous as crystal, I will never leave—I prayed, in that day, that I might never leave them. ‘Let the gods come to my sacrificial pile! But never may Bel come to it, for he did not master himself, but he made the waterspout for the Deluge, and he has numbered men for the pit.’

“From far, in drawing near, Bel saw the vessel and stopped. He was filled with anger against the gods and against the heavenly archangels.

“‘No one shall come out alive! No man shall be preserved from the abyss.’ Adar opened his mouth and said—he said to the warrior Bel, ‘Who other than Ea should have formed this resolution; for Ea possesses knowledge and [he preserves] all.’ Ea opened his mouth and spake: he said to the warrior Bel, ‘O thou, herald of the gods, warrior—as thou didst not master thyself, thou hast made the waterspout of the deluge. Let the sinner carry the weight of his sins; the blasphemer the weight of his blasphemy. Please thyself with this good pleasure and it shall never be infringed; faith in it [shall] never [be violated]. Instead of thy making a new deluge, let lions and hyænas appear and reduce the number of men; let there be famine, and let the earth be [devastated]; let Dibbara² appear, and let men be mown down. I have not revealed the decision of the great gods: it is Khasisatra who interpreted a dream and comprehended what the gods had decided.’

“Then, when his resolve [to destroy the remnant of men] was arrested, Bel entered into the vessel, and took

¹ This is a metaphorical expression for the rainbow.

² The god of epidemics.

my hand, and made me rise. He made my wife rise and place herself at my side. He walked round us and stopped short. He approached our group. 'Until now Khasisatra has been mortal, but now, he and his wife are going to be carried away to live like the gods, and he will live afar, at the mouth of the rivers.' They carried me away, and established me in a remote place, at the mouth of the stream."

Such is the latest and most perfect translation of this wonderful legend, from which only a few words of repetition have been omitted. The points of resemblance and of contrast with the Bible narrative, both in it and the shorter version of Berosus, appear on the surface. Nothing is said in Scripture of the burial of writings, and there is no trace of the polytheism which disfigures both accounts. The length of the ark in Berosus is, to its breadth, as 5 to 2; in Genesis, it is as 6 to 1; in the tablets, as 10 to 1. In Berosus and the tablets, instead of a simple patriarch like Noah, we have a king; and instead of a single family alone being saved, we have friends, servants, and young people in the ark, with all the royal treasures. In the tablets the deluge lasted only six days and nights, in Genesis it lasted forty days and nights, and it was, in all, a hundred and fifty days before the waters had disappeared. In the Bible it is said that seven pairs of clean beasts were taken and one pair of unclean; in the Chaldean accounts there is no mention of clean or unclean. Shamas (the Sun god), is represented as saying "Enter into the vessel and close the door." The Bible says, "And Jehovah shut him in." The Chaldean account has a pilot; there is none in that of Genesis; but in both the ark is coated with bitumen. According to the tablets, there were let loose a dove, a swallow, and a raven; in Genesis, a raven and a dove. In the tablets and Genesis,

alike, the rainbow appears as a sign of Divine satisfaction with a sacrifice offered after the flood had passed off, and in both there is an assurance that the earth should never again be visited with the same form of destruction. The issue, however, is different with regard to those saved. On the tablets and in Berosus some are taken away by the gods; in Genesis they remain alive to repeople the earth. The Chaldean accounts had evidently mingled the story of Enoch with that of Noah.

We have thus an independent tradition, of the highest antiquity, recording the fact of a great deluge having destroyed all the human race except a favoured few, and that as a punishment for their sins. But this tradition, though like that of Scripture in some points, is yet distinct from it in its whole spirit and tone; for though both come from the same region and from times equally remote, they have done so through different races.

In the tract, "On the Syrian Goddess," formerly attributed to Lucian, we learn the version of this Chaldean tradition which was current among the Syrians, and through them introduced to the West, among the Greeks and Romans. "When I asked how old this temple was (that of the Syrian goddess, at Hieropolis)," says the writer, "and to what goddess in their opinion it had been consecrated, I received many explanations, in secret and openly; some out of the way, but others at one with the Greek opinion. Most said that Deucalion from Scythia, in whose days the terrible flood happened, had founded it. Now I have heard the history of Deucalion from the Greeks, who say that the present race of men is not the first,—since the first had been utterly destroyed,—but had sprung from Deucalion. The original race, they say, were violent people, guilty of much that was wrong; keeping neither their oath nor observing hospitality, and

showing pity on no one; for which they were sorely punished. The earth in fact opened and poured out much water; terrible rains fell; the floods rose over their banks, and the sea widened its shores, till the waters covered all things and the human race perished. Deucalion alone survived, on account of his wisdom and piety, to restore the family of mankind. The way he escaped was this. He built a great ark, in which he put his wives and children, and into which he also himself went. At the same time there came swine, horses, lions, serpents, and all other beasts which the earth nourished, and he received them all into the ark. There, they did him no harm, for there was a great friendship among all, which Jupiter put in their hearts, and thus they lived in the ark as long as the waters lasted. This is the story the Greeks tell of Deucalion. The Hieropolitans add to it something very wonderful. They say that a great cleft opened in their land which swallowed up all the waters, and that, after this, Deucalion built altars and raised a temple to Juno, over the cleft. I have seen it; it is very narrow and situated under the temple. Whether it was once large and had now shrunk, I do not know; but I have seen it and it is quite small. Now-a-days they bring water twice a year to the temple; not only the priests, but a great multitude of people from all Syria, Arabia, and from beyond the Euphrates, going to the sea and fetching it. They then pour it out first in the temple, from which it runs off into the cleft. They do this, they say, in obedience to a command of Deucalion, in remembrance of the calamity suffered and of the escape vouchsafed.”¹

A passage in the Bhagawata, one of the sacred books of India, is no less striking. The whole earth, we are told, was covered with a deluge, and all men destroyed

¹ Rosenmüller's *Das Alte und Neue Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 27.

except the then reigning king, with seven holy men and their wives. And it happened in this way. The king was making his legal washing one day in a river, when the god Vishnu appeared to him and told him that in seven days all creatures who had done him wrong should be destroyed by a flood. "Thou, however," the god continued, "shalt be saved in a roomy, wonderfully built vessel. Take therefore all kinds of wholesome plants and grain for food, and also the seven holy men; your own wives, and a pair of all kinds of animals. Go without fear into the ark, for thou shalt see me face to face, and all thy questions will be answered." After seven days the sea rose over its bounds, and then the prince saw a great vessel floating on the waters. Into this he entered, following carefully the commands of Vishnu, who, in the form of a great fish, dragged along the ark by means of a great sea-serpent, which he used as a rope. A demon had stolen the Vedas from Brahma, but after the flood Vishnu killed him, and having got the Vedas back, taught the king heavenly wisdom from them, and appointed him to be the king of the new world.¹

There are, in all, four versions of the tradition of the Flood known in Indian literature, but it has been pointed out by Eugene Burnouf, that it does not occur in the Vedic hymns, the most ancient Sanscrit writings, and that it seems to have been a foreign importation, of Semitic, or rather Babylonian origin, in very remote, but, still, historical times. The metamorphosis of Vishnu into a fish is, itself, a strong corroboration of this, for there is no trace of fish worship in India, and no similar legend

¹ This is the version given by Rosenmüller. A shorter one of a more heathen tone, has been given by Max Müller from another Indian source. See *Contemporary Review* (Nov., 1879), p 477.

or allusion in its mythology. But the fish-god was a prominent deity in Babylon. The image of the god Ea who plays so prominent a part in the Chaldean legends of the Flood, almost invariably combines the form of a man and a fish, like the god Dagon, which was an importation from Mesopotamia to the shores of Palestine. The similarity of the Indian tradition to that of Genesis, in the numbers given, is striking. Vishnu gives the warning, "In seven days all creatures shall be destroyed," while Scripture says, "Yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth." "In seven days the sea rose above its bounds," says the Purana; "after seven days the waters of the flood were upon the earth," says Genesis. In the same way, on the tablets, the flood begins on the evening of the seventh day, and commences to abate after seven days. Such a repeated use of the same number seems a further reason for believing the Indian tradition to have come from the same region as the legend on the tablets and the account in Genesis.

But if this tradition came originally from the Euphrates, those of other races show versions so entirely distinct, that they cannot be held to have been borrowed from Hebrew or Chaldean sources. All the Aryan races had their own—the ancient Persians, the Greeks, the Celts, the Scandinavians. "They say," says Plutarch, repeating the Greek tradition, "that a dove let out from the ark by Deucalion, showed by its return to him that the waters were abating; and again, by its not returning, that the skies had cleared." M. E. Naville has translated¹ from an ancient Egyptian tomb-inscription, a striking narrative, showing that that strange race also had their tradition of a destruction of mankind,

¹ *Transactions of The Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. iv. pp. 1-19.

except a very few, designed to reproduce a better race. The calamity comes on account of human corruption. An expiatory sacrifice after the visitation appeases the Divine wrath, and a solemn covenant is made between men and the Deity, who swears never to destroy them again. In these points the resemblance to the Bible account of the Flood is very striking, nor is it strange that the Egyptians, to whom the inundation of the Nile was the symbol of prosperity and health, should have changed the mode of the Divine punishment from that of a flood to a direct destruction from above, or have made the rise of the Nile a sign that the Divine anger was past.





CHAPTER XIV.

THE FLOOD (*continued*).

IT is a singular confirmation of the Deluge as a great historical event, that it is thus found engraven in the memories of all the great nations of antiquity ; but it is still more striking to find it holding a place in the traditions of the most widely spread races of America, and indeed of the world at large. Thus Alfred Maury, a French writer of immense erudition, speaks of it as “a very remarkable fact, that we find in America traditions of the Deluge coming infinitely nearer those of the Bible and of the Chaldean religion than the legends of any people of the old world.”

The ancient inhabitants of Mexico had many variations of the legend among their various tribes. In some, rude paintings were found representing the Deluge. Not a few believed that a vulture was sent out of the ship, and that, like the raven of the Chaldean tablets, it did not return, but fed on the dead bodies of the drowned. Other versions say that a humming bird alone, out of many birds sent off, returned with a branch covered with leaves in its beak. Among the Cree Indians of the present day in the Arctic circle, in North America, Sir John Richardson found similar traces of the great tradition. “The Crees,” he says, “spoke of a universal Deluge,

caused by an attempt of the fish to drown one who was a kind of demigod, with whom they had quarrelled. Having constructed a raft, he embarked with his family, and all kinds of birds and beasts. After the flood had continued some time, he ordered several waterfowls to dive to the bottom, but they were all drowned. A musk rat, however, having been sent on the same errand, was more successful, and returned with a mouthful of mud." From other tribes in every part of America, travellers have brought many variations of the same world-wide tradition, nor are even the scattered islands of the Great Southern Ocean without versions of their own. In Tahiti, the natives used to tell of the god Ruahatu having told two men, "who were at sea, fishing—Return to the shore, and tell men that the earth will be covered with water, and all the world will perish. To-morrow morning go to the islet called Toamarama; it will be a place of safety for you and your children. Then Ruahatu caused the sea to cover the lands. All were covered, and all men perished except the two and their families."¹ In other islands we find legends recording the building of an altar after the Deluge; the collection of pairs of all the domestic animals, to save them, while the Fiji islanders give the number of the human beings saved, as eight.²

Thus, the story of the Deluge is a universal tradition among all branches of the human family, with the one exception, as Lenormant³ tells us, of the black. How

¹ Gaussein, *Du Dialecte de Tahiti*, etc., p. 255. See also Ellis' *Polynesian Researches*, vol. ii. pp. 57-59.

² Hardwick's *Christ and other Masters*, pt. ii. ; p. 185.

³ M. Lenormant is one of the most learned men of France, a devout believer in Christianity, and a resolute defender of the Scriptures. "Africa," he says, "has no traditions of the flood."

else could this arise but from the ineradicable remembrance of a real and terrible event. It must, besides, have happened so early in the history of mankind that the story of it could spread with the race from their original cradle, for the similarity of the versions over the earth point to a common source. It is, moreover, preserved in its fullest and least diluted form among the three great races, which are the ancestors of the three great families of mankind—the Aryans, from whom sprang the populations of India, Persia, and Europe; the Turanians; and the Semitic stock, who were the progenitors of the Jew, the Arab, and other related races, including the Cushite and Egyptian. These, it is striking to note, were the specially civilized peoples of the early world, and must have learned the story before they separated from their common home in Western Asia. “Like certain families of the vegetable kingdom,” says Humboldt thoughtfully, in reference to this subject, “which, notwithstanding the diversity of climate and the influence of heights, retain the impression of a common type, these traditions of nations display everywhere the same physiognomy, and preserve features of resemblance that fill us with astonishment. How many different tongues, belonging to branches that appear completely distinct, transmit to us the same fact! The bases of the traditions concerning races that are destroyed, and the renewal of nature, scarcely vary; though every nation gives them a local colouring. In the great continents as in the smallest islands of the Pacific Ocean, it is always on the loftiest and nearest mountain that the remains of the human race have been saved; and this event appears the more recent, in proportion as the nations are uncultivated, and as the knowledge they have of their own existence has not a very remote date.”

The precise shape of the ark has been the subject of no little controversy. The Hebrew word for it is apparently Egyptian,¹ and is translated in the Greek version by the word for a wooden box, chest, or coffer,² while in the Vulgate it is called an ark; that is, a chest. The Egyptian word means a chest, or coffer, or sarcophagus; so that all agree in the idea of a vessel four cornered, like a box; if we are to understand them literally. J. D. Michaelis, however, with his delight in new opinions and his vivid acuteness, was very unwilling to think it could have been a mere chest, "which could hardly float on the sea, and stood in imminent danger of being whirled round and round by the waves." "Kibōtos—the Greek word"—says he, "had, assuredly, various meanings at Alexandria. For example, a part of the harbour bore that name, but in common Greek it especially means a coffin or sarcophagus. Could it have meant in Alexandria, first a sarcophagus, and then a Nile-boat of about the proportions after which Noah's ship was built? The old Egyptians bore corpses on boats to the place of burial; the boatman was called Charon, and the fable of Charon's boat is in some degree of Egyptian origin, while the name—Charon's Sea—still survives in Egypt. Still more, whoever has seen a mummy knows that the coffin or chest in which it lies is like a long boat, though from the thickness of the wood in the middle it has not the exact proportions of Noah's ark. Perhaps the Greek translators meant by Kibōtos, a Nile boat, named from such a mummy coffin."³

He then goes on remark, that, "In the beginning of the previous century—the seventeenth—a ship had been

¹ Hebrew, Tabah. Old Egyptian, Teb, Tebh, Tep.

² Kibōtos.

³ *Orientalische und exægetische Bibliothek* (1781), vol. xviii. p. 22

built with a rounded hull, after the proportions given in the sixth of Genesis, and it had been found, to the astonishment of all, that these proportions, given in the oldest book in the world, were precisely the most advantageous for safety, for stowage, and even for swiftness!" "George Horn," he continues, "Professor of History at Leyden in the last century, in his 'Compendium of Universal History,' gives the name of a person who had seen this ship, which was called *Noah's Ark*. At the time of the truce between the Spaniards and the Dutch, in 1609, there lived at Hoorn, in North Holland, a Mennonist, Peter Jansen, who took the notion that he would build a ship of the same proportions as Noah's ark, only smaller; that is, 120 feet long, 20 feet broad, and 12 high. While it was building every one laughed at him; but, Dutchman-like, he kept sturdily on, and found, in the end, that it justified his expectations. For when launched, it proved to be able to bear a third more freight than other ships of the same measurement, required no more hands to manage it than they, and sailed far faster. The result was that the Dutch built many others like it, calling them Noah's Arks, and they only ceased to be used after the close of the truce, in 1621, because they could not carry cannon, and thus were not safe against privateers or pirates."¹

The ark is said, in Genesis,² to have rested on the *mountains* of Ararat; not on a mountain called Ararat, as we generally assume. The word, in the Assyrian inscriptions, is a name for Armenia, but there is no hint of any particular mountain bearing the name.³ The special

¹ *Orientalische und exegetische Bibliothek* (1781), vol. xviii. p. 28.

² Chap. viii. 4.

³ Schrader, E. *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, p. 10.

district meant, which, indeed, still bears the ancient name,¹ is one bounded, on the south, by a high chain of mountains on the middle course of the Araxes, a river flowing into the Caspian. In later times the name was given to the mountains themselves, and especially to their highest summit, which rises 16,254 feet above the sea, and has long been known as the Greater Mount Ararat, while another peak close by, 4,000 feet lower, is called the Lesser Ararat. This, however, is an incorrect transference of the name; arising no doubt from the translation of the Hebrew words in the Bible, by "the mountains of Ararat," instead of "the mountains of the country of Ararat." In Isaiah xxxvii. 38, the Hebrew words, "the land of Ararat,"² are translated, "land of Armenia," and so, in 2 Kings xix. 37.

The mountain now known as Ararat is an almost isolated volcanic cone, and has been ascended by Europeans at various times; the last who reached its summit being Professor Bryce, of Oxford, who found the upper parts often difficult to climb, from the softness of the ashy rock. There is, however, no crater. Strange to say, the mountain has considerably altered in shape since 1840; an earthquake having loosened part of it and hurled it down.³ Its name in Armenia is Massis, not Ararat. Snow lies on the top, but it is not at all necessary to suppose that the ark rested on any but a comparatively low point of the range of which it forms apart. The Syrian tradition places the spot in Kurdistan, in the same region, though more to the south-west; but the

¹ Gesenius' *Heb. Handwörterbuch* (8th ed., 1878), p. 77.

² Ararat means "the plains of the Aryans" in Old Armenian. Brockhaus' *Lexicon*, vol. ii. p. 60.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

texts of Isaiah and Kings already quoted are opposed to this being the locality.¹

It is a curious fact that the oleaster, which may well have supplied the "olive leaf" of Noah's dove, grows profusely in the district of Ararat.²

The EXTENT of the Deluge has long been a subject of keen discussion. Until within the last generation its strict universality was hardly questioned. Thus we find even so lately as in the notes to Bagster's "Comprehensive Bible;" written, it may be, within the last thirty or forty years, that "the evidence of its universality is most incontestable. The moose deer, a native of America, has been found buried in Ireland; elephants, natives of Asia and Africa, in the midst of England; crocodiles, natives of the Nile, in the heart of Germany; and shell-fish, never known in any but the American seas; with the entire skeletons of whales; in the most inland counties of England." It needs hardly be said that the least tincture of geological knowledge explodes the whole of this string of illustrations. The date of all these remains is inconceivably more remote than that of the Flood. The Irish elk is not the American moose; and the evidence is perfect that the great quadrupeds found in the more recent formations, or in the superficial drift in England, lived as well as died where they are found, and that the climate, as well as the flora and fauna, have been changed, again and again, over all the earth. The argument of the writer of this note would seek to demonstrate the universality of the flood from all the fossil remains discovered; but these range through whole miles of rock, of many kinds, slowly deposited during successive geological ages, at the bottom of ancient

¹ Art. Ararat, in Riehm's *Bib. Handwörterbuch*.

² *Ibid*.

oceans or other waters. Surely it will not be maintained that a flood which left the leaf on an olive-tree, could have formed beds of rock to the thickness of mile upon mile ; or have seen the creation of successive types of animal and vegetable life, from the corals of the lowest rocks, through every upward stage, to the highest. But the idea needs no refutation. It is at best a curious antiquarian reminiscence. The sketch of the age of the world, given in an earlier chapter, will show its complete untenableness.

In 1823 Professor Buckland published his "*Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*," to vindicate the Scripture narrative, by a study of the present surface of the earth. The existence of huge beds of gravel in positions to which no rivers or torrents now in existence could have borne them, and the fact that masses of rock carried far from their original site, are found strewn over and through them, were thought proofs of the passage of a flood like that of Noah over the regions where they occur. It has been shown, however, that this gravel, or drift, is of no one age, but of all ages ; and that the boulders in it have evidently been transported to their present positions, not by a sudden rush of water, but by icebergs or glaciers ; their surfaces being scratched exactly like those of the stones frozen into such masses of moving ice, and the rocks over which they pass. The retreat of the ice sheets that at various times covered most of Britain, and the melting of icebergs ; with the consequent dropping of the boulders frozen into them—sometimes, even now, amounting to 20,000 tons in the case of a single iceberg—sufficiently and convincingly explained all the phenomena met with, and led Dr. Buckland himself to admit that his argument could not be maintained.

The theories that have at different times been proposed to explain the Mosaic deluge, on the supposition of

its being universal, form a curious chapter in the history of literature. Dr. Burnet,¹ in his "Theory of the Earth," published in 1680-1689, supposes that, before the Deluge, the surface of the earth was perfectly flat, without mountains, valleys, or seas, and that its interior was filled with water. The outer crust, he conceives, became so heated by the sun, after a time, as to be split into fissures through which the waters within, expanded by the heat, burst out with tremendous force, drowning all the race, and leaving the crust so unsupported that it fell together in dire confusion, creating on the one hand the vast hollows of the present oceans, and on the other, raising the hills and mountains of the world; the surplus waters flowing back into the hollow central abyss. By such a theory he hoped to account for the vast quantity of water required for a universal deluge; which he reckoned would be eight times as much as is contained in our present oceans and seas.

Ray,² a naturalist eminent in his day, adopted this theory, with the slight change of supposing the final catastrophe to have risen from a shifting of the earth's centre. Dr. Halley,³ the astronomer, however, while also adopting it, supposed—astronomer-like—that the shock of a comet was the disturbing force. But all these theorists forgot that such agencies as they suggested would have caused an instantaneous deluge, not a gradual one like that of Genesis; nor did they explain how Noah could be

¹ Thomas Burnet, born 1635, a Cambridge M.A. Born in Yorkshire, and latterly Master of the Charter House, and Clerk of the Closet to William III.; died in 1715.

² John Ray or Wray. Studied at Cambridge, died in 1705. As a botanist and zoologist he ranks very high. His deluge theory was published in 1692.

³ Edmund Halley. Born 1656, died 1742.

saved in a convulsion which literally tore the earth in pieces. Whiston,¹ in his "New Theory of the Earth," published in 1696, went, indeed, even so far, after calculating that the comet of 1680 had appeared on "the 28th Nov., B.C. 1349, as to publish a tract with the title, 'The Cause of the Deluge *Demonstrated.*'"

The Rev. William Kirby, the eminent entomologist, in his old age, astonished the world by propounding a theory still more extravagant. Not only did he believe in an abyss of waters within the earth; he held also that there was a subterranean "metropolis of animals," where the huge saurians of the oolite and lias still survive.

Two writers, Mr. Granville Penn and Mr. Fairholme, were amongst the last of the long list of worthy men who thought fit to put in print their theories of a universal deluge. They supposed that between the Creation and the Flood—a period reckoned as 1656 years—all the fossiliferous rocks, that is, a depth of six miles of various rock-systems, were deposited at the bottom of the ocean. By the Flood, they fancied, these were raised above the level of the waters and became the present dry land; the original surface, including the Garden of Eden, having been submerged.

Thoughtful men of all shades of religious opinion have, meanwhile, come to the opposite conclusion; that the Noachian Deluge was only a local one, though sufficiently extensive in its area to destroy all the then existing race of men. In support of this view many arguments have been offered, of which a few may be briefly stated.

The stupendous greatness of the miracle involved in a universal deluge, seems a strong reason to doubt the likelihood of God having resorted to a course wholly

¹ Wm. Whiston, M.A., Professor at Cambridge, Translator of Josephus. Born 1667, died 1752.

unnecessary to effect the end mainly in view—the judgment of mankind for their sins. There could certainly be no apparent reason for submerging the vast proportion of the world which was then uninhabited, or of raising the waters above the tops of mountains to which no living creature could approach. It is to be remembered, moreover, that the addition of such a vast mass of water to the weight of the earth—eight times that contained in the ocean beds—would have disarranged the whole solar system, and even the other systems of worlds through the universe; for all are interbalanced with each other in their various relations. Then, this immeasurable volume of water, after having served its brief use, must have been annihilated, to restore the harmony of the heavenly motions: the only instance in the whole economy of nature of the annihilation of even a particle of matter. Nor could any part of either the animal or vegetable worlds have survived a submersion of the planet for a year; and hence everything, except what the ark contained, must have perished; including even the fish; of which many species would die out if the water were fresh, others, if it were brackish, and others, again, if it were salt.

Men of the soundest orthodoxy have further urged that physical evidences still exist which prove that the Deluge could only have been local. Thus Professor Henslow supports De Candolle's estimate of the age of some of the baobab trees of Senegal as not less than 5,230 years, and of the taxodium of Mexico as from 4,000 to 6,000; periods which carry still living trees beyond that of the Flood. There is, moreover, in Auvergne, in France, a district covered with extinct volcanoes, marked by cones of pumice stone, ashes, and such light substances as could not have resisted the waters of the Deluge. Yet they are

evidently more ancient than the time of Noah; for since they became extinct, rivers have cut channels for themselves through beds of columnar basalt, that is, of intensely hard crystallized lava, of no less than 150 feet in thickness, and have even eaten into the granite rocks beneath. And Auvergne is not the only part where similar phenomena are seen. They are found in the Eifel country of the Prussian Rhine province; in New Zealand, and elsewhere.

Nor is the peculiarity of some regions in their zoological characteristics less convincing. Thus, the fauna of Australia is entirely exceptional; as, for example, in the strange fact that quadrupeds of all kinds are marsupial, that is, provided with a pouch in which to carry their young. The fossil remains of this great island continent show, moreover, that existing species are the direct descendants of similar races, of extreme antiquity, and that the surface of Australia is the oldest land, of any considerable extent, yet discovered on the globe—dating back at least to the Tertiary geological age; since which it has not been disturbed to any great extent. But this carries us to a period immensely more remote than Noah.

Nor is it possible to conceive of an assemblage of all the living creatures of the different regions of the earth at any one spot. The unique fauna of Australia—survivors of a former geological age—certainly could neither have reached the ark nor regained their home after leaving it; for they are separated from the nearest continuous land by vast breadths of ocean. The Polar bear surely could not survive a journey from his native icebergs to the sultry plains of Mesopotamia; nor could the animals of South America have reached these except by travelling the whole length, northwards, of North America, and then, after miraculously crossing Behring's Straits, having pressed, westwards, across the whole breadth of Asia, a

continent larger than the moon. That even a deer should accomplish such a pedestrian feat is inconceivable, but how could a sloth have done it—a creature which lives in trees, never, if possible, descending to the ground, and able to advance on it only by the slowest and most painful motions? Or, how could tropical creatures find supplies of food in passing through such a variety of climates, and over vast spaces of hideous desert?

Still more—how could any vessel, however large, have held pairs and sevens of all the creatures on earth, with food for a year, and how could the whole family of Noah have attended to them? There are at least two thousand mammals; more than seven thousand kinds of birds; from the gigantic ostrich to the humming bird; and over fifteen hundred kinds of amphibious animals and reptiles;¹ not to speak of 120,000² kinds of insects, and an unknown multitude of varieties of infusoria. Nor does this include the many thousand kinds of mollusca, radiata, and fish. Even if the ark, as has been supposed by one writer, was of 80,000 tons burden,³ such a freighting needs only be mentioned to make it be felt impossible.

Look which way we like, gigantic difficulties meet us. Thus, Hugh Miller⁴ has noticed that it would have required a continuous miracle to keep alive the fish for whom the deluge water was unsuitable, while even spawn would perish if kept unhatched for a whole year, as that of many fish must have been. Nor would the vegetable world have fared better than the animal, for of the 100,000 known species of plants, very few would survive a year's submersion.

¹ Schödler's *Buch der Natur*, vol. ii. p. 375.

² Brockhaus' *Lexicon*, art Insecten.

³ Note to Bagster's *Comprehensive Bible*, 4to.

⁴ *Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 337.

That a terrible catastrophe like that of the Flood—apart from the all-sufficient statements of Scripture—is not outside geological probability, is abundantly illustrated by recorded facts. The subsidence and upheaval of large extents of country has already been noticed. Nor can we justly measure the quiet of the present, though it is only comparative, with the violence of periods in the past. The vast chains of the Himalayah, the Caucasus, the Jura mountains and the Alps, for example, were all upheaved in the Pliocene period, which is one of the most recent in geology.¹ A subsidence or elevation of a district, as the case might be, would cause a tremendous flood over vast regions.² Nor are such movements of the earth's surface on a great scale unknown even now. Darwin repeatedly instances cases of recent elevation and depression of the earth's surface. On one part of the Island of St. Maria, in Chili, he found beds of putrid mussel shells still adhering to the rocks, ten feet above high-water mark, where the inhabitants had formerly dived at low-water spring tides for these shells.³ Similar shells were met with by him at Valparaiso at the height of 1,300 feet.⁴ And at another place a great bed of now-existing shells had been raised 350 feet above the level of the sea.⁵

“I have convincing proofs,” says he, “that this part of the continent of South America—Northern Chili—has been elevated, near the coast, at least from 400 to 500, and in some parts from 1,000 to 1,300 feet since the epoch of existing shells; and further inland the rise possibly

¹ Heer, *The Primeval World of Switzerland*, vol. ii. p. 284.

² See pp. 144, 145.

³ Darwin's *Naturalist's Voyage*, p. 310.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 310, 254.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

may have been greater.”¹ Wallace shows that a vast portion of the South of Asia—from the east coast of Cochin China, to the west coast of Sumatra, and thence round the outside of Borneo, itself nearly twice as large as Great Britain and Ireland together—has sunk beneath the ocean since the creation of the present forms of vegetation and animal life. This vast area embraces 27 degrees from north to south, and 21 from east to west; including a region of over 2,000,000 square miles. In all parts of this the sea is still so shallow—never exceeding 50 fathoms in depth—that ships can anchor in any part of it.² Elevations also are as marked as this amazing subsidence. “In many places,” says he, “I have observed the unaltered surfaces of the elevated reefs, with great masses of coral standing up in their natural position, and hundreds of shells so fresh-looking that it was hard to believe that they had been more than a few years out of the water; and, in fact, it is very probable that such changes have occurred within a few centuries.”³ No difficulty on geological grounds can therefore be urged against such a catastrophe having happened, in the early ages of our race, as would have swept the whole seat of human habitation with a deluge in whose waters all mankind must have perished.

The great cause, without question, of the belief that the Flood was universal, has been the idea that the words of Scripture taught this respecting that awful visitation. But it by no means does so. The word translated “earth” in our English version has not only the meaning of the world as a whole, but others much more limited.

¹ Darwin's *Naturalist's Voyage*, p. 358.

² Wallace's *The Malay Archipelago*, vol. i. p. 14.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 10.

Thus it often stands for Palestine alone,¹ and even for the small district round a town,² or for a field or plot of land.³ Besides, we must not forget that such words are always to be understood according to the meaning attached to them by the age or people among whom they are used. But what ideas the ancient Hebrews had of the world has been already shown, and the limited sense in which they used the most general phrases—just as we ourselves often do when we wish to create a vivid impression of wide extent or great number—is seen from the usage of their descendants, in the New Testament. When St. Luke speaks of Jews dwelling at Jerusalem out of “every nation under heaven,”⁴ it would surely be wrong to press this to a literal exactness. When St. Paul says that the faith of the obscure converts at Rome was spoken of “throughout the whole world,”⁵ he could not have meant the whole round orb, but only the Roman empire. And would any one think of taking in the modern geographical sense his declaration that already, when he was writing to the Colossians, the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven?⁶

A striking passage in “The Testimony of the Rocks,” may fittingly close this subject. “There is a remarkable portion of the globe,” says Hugh Miller, “chiefly on the Asiatic continent, though it extends into Europe, and which is nearly equal to all Europe in area—whose rivers, the Volga, the Oural, and others, do not fall into the ocean or into any of the many seas which communicate with it. They are, on the contrary, turned inwards, if I may so express myself; losing themselves in the

¹ Joel i. 2. Ps. xxxvii. 9, 11, 22, 29; xlv. 3. Prov. ii. 21; x. 30

² Josh. viii. 1.

³ Gen. xxiii. 15. Exod. xxiii. 10.

⁴ Acts ii. 5.

⁵ Rom. i. 8.

⁶ Col. i. 23.

eastern parts of the tract, in the lakes of a rainless district, in which they only supply the waste of evaporation; and falling, in the western parts, into seas such as the Caspian and the Aral. In this region there are extensive districts still under the level of the ocean. The shore line of the Caspian, for example, is rather more than 83 feet beneath that of the Black Sea; and some of the great flat steppes which spread out around it have a mean level of about 30 feet below that of the Baltic. Were a trench-like strip of country communicating between the Caspian and the Gulf of Finland to be depressed beneath the level of the latter sea, it would so open the fountains of the great deep as to lay under water an extensive and populous region, containing the cities of Astrachan and Astrabad, and many other towns and villages. Nor is it unworthy of remark that part of this peculiar region forms no inconsiderable portion of the great recognised centre of the human family.”¹ Read in connection with what is said elsewhere² of the movements of the earth’s surface over the Baltic region even at this day, this passage is very striking.

¹ *Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 345.

² See pp. 144, 145.





CHAPTER XV.

AFTER THE FLOOD.

TRUE to the simplicity of the early ages of mankind, the relations of men to the Almighty are presented in Scripture in language suited to such a state of society. Abstract ideas are formed only at a late period in the development of a race: like children, they must long be addressed through the senses rather than by the intellect alone. Hence, instead of speaking of God in lofty and mysterious terms; then quite unintelligible, and hardly less so now; Scripture habitually ascribes to Him the actions, emotions, and language which men themselves would have used in similar circumstances. Adam and Eve,¹ we are told, heard the voice of God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day²—that is, when the fresh breeze of evening has succeeded the sultry heat of noon. He is described as speaking the creative words; as pronouncing the curse in human language; as holding judgment on Cain in direct arraignment and condemnation; as repenting that He had

¹ The name of Eve was perpetuated among the Assyrians, in that of their goddess Ava—"life." The Hebrew word is Havah. The name Adam was in the same way perpetuated in Assyrian in the form Admu, dadmu or dadmi=dust. See p. 83.

² This is the full translation.

made man on the earth, and as grieved at His heart as directing Noah in the details of the plan of the ark, and as making a covenant with Him, in human speech, after the Deluge.

It is not, however, to be thought from such modes of expression, that human characteristics are intended to be ascribed to the Creator. In any age it is necessary to describe the unknown by the help of the known, and as the mysterious Personality of God must ever be incomprehensible to man, there is no way in which we can represent His relations to us, except by using words borrowed from our own faculties, emotions, and modes of action. Language, in any case, is at first a series of images appealing to the senses, and it only slowly passes into an abstract term in which the idea is directly embodied. The simple word "man," meant, at first, "the thinking being";¹ "woman" was originally "wife-man," and our word "God," though so like "good," seems to have come, rather, from the Sanscrit word, "gudha," "the self-concealing invisible One."² The word "angel" means simply "a messenger;" and though spirits "have neither flesh nor bones as we have," it is impossible to speak of them except under the imaginative form of a perfect human shape, and human attributes. So also with God. Knowing no being higher than ourselves, we must speak of Him by images drawn from our own nature, or leave Him a cold and inconceivable abstraction, like the Hindoo Brahma.

The exquisite naturalness with which this inevitable accommodation to our necessities is carried out in it, marks the extreme antiquity of the Bible. The world was still young when the Old Testament was written, especially its earliest parts; and the sacred writers only

¹ See p. 89.

² Müller's *Etymol. Sprach-Wörterbuch*.

speak as we should expect them, when they use a child-like simplicity. But the whole Bible, alike, impresses on us the remembrance that human attributes ascribed to God are only figures of speech; for even Moses expressly forbids any representations of Him. Heathen nations might personify their divinities in images and paintings: no more was permitted to Israel than to use the imagery of words which our mental constitution absolutely demands.

Little is told us of Noah's life after his wonderful preservation. Descending with his family from the ark,¹ he built the first altar of which there is any mention, and offered on it, as was fitting, a burnt-offering "of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl." It may be in remembrance of this earliest consecration of the mountain tops to grateful worship, that "high places" have been so universal among all races, in all ages, and that cairns and cromlechs were built on heights from the remotest times. Paradise had vanished with the Flood, and God Himself, as it were, removed from earth to heaven; though still present to save those who duly honoured Him. What spot could be more appropriate for recommencing the homage of the race to Him, than one raised above the common earth; one marked, moreover, by so signal an event as the deliverance of the remnant of mankind?

When the division of animals into clean and unclean

¹ The "gopher wood" (Gen. vi. 14) of which the ark was built, is mentioned only in this one place. It seems to have been the "Copher," or cypress tree, which grows more abundantly in Chaldea and Armenia than in any other country. Gesenius defines it, "a pitch and resin producing tree, as the pine, cedar, fir or cypress." *Thesaurus*, 300. The Sept. wrongly translates it "squared beams."

was made we are not informed, but it is worthy of notice that Noah does not confine himself in his offering to those regarded as clean under the law of Moses.¹ The greatness of the occasion, however, demanded a sacrifice in keeping with it, and Noah, moreover, had provided for this in the number of clean creatures admitted into the ark. Nor is there any mention of offering parts of the victims only, as was appointed by Moses:² the whole seems to have been laid on the altar, as a form of sacrifice peculiar to the patriarchal age.

A brief phrase, which henceforth became the standing form for the Divine satisfaction with a sacrifice, expresses the reconciliation which followed between earth and heaven. God “smelled a sweet savour,”³ and graciously gave a promise that man should never again be destroyed by a Deluge. Henceforth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, should never cease. The Hebrews marked their year by the rainy winter time, with its cold, and its preparation of the soil and sowing—and the dry summer, with its heat, and its harvest.⁴ As yet, like the Hindoos still, the hoary fathers of the world had six seasons.

God had given His blessing to man when first created, and now repeated it when our race was beginning anew. Nature, in all its tribes, was formally subjected to mankind. Our first parents had received a gift of all that grows as their food, but henceforth every “moving thing that lives”—not, therefore, the Levitically clean alone, was to be our “meat.” But with this there were limitations. The warm blood of men and humbler creatures seemed, in the early ages of the world, to contain the very

¹ Lev. i. 2, 10, 14.

² Lev. i.

³ Lev. i. 9.

⁴ Exod. xxxiv. 21. Ps. lxxiv. 17. Prov. xx. 4. Isa. xviii. 4, 6. Jer. viii. 20; xxxvi. 22. Amos iii. 15. Zech. xiv. 8.

life, and to be almost identical with the soul, and hence it was especially sacred, in proportion as the life and spirit were held in reverence. The sight of what was believed to be the soul itself, carried the mind instantly to thoughts of God, called up in it mysterious fears, and filled it with the unspeakable awe which overpowers us when the veil between us and the Divine is for the moment rent. Hence, blood could scarcely be touched, far less eaten, by piously-minded men in the early ages, and in this spirit God forbade its use, with the utmost strictness, to Noah, and afterwards to Israel. As the seat of life and indivisible from it—of that life which belongs to God, it was to be shunned. Even that of creatures slain for food must be covered with earth and hidden out of sight. Life must be honoured as divine and sacred: a rule of unspeakable worth in the violence of rude ages. A further sanctity was thrown over the precept in after times, by Moses, in the command that the blood of all sacrifices should be poured out on the altar, as an “atonement for the soul”¹ of the offerer. On this prohibition and the others that follow, the Rabbis founded the requirements demanded from heathen half-proselytes; to shun idolatry, blasphemy, murder, the eating of blood and things strangled, fornication and incest, robbery and theft, and disobedience to authority.² Nor is it without interest to note that this rabbinical law was so generally accepted in the days of our Lord that it was adopted by the Apostolic Church as the rule for Gentile converts to Christianity.³

A second prohibition throws further light on patriarchal morals and social polity. While the animals could be killed at man’s will, human blood was not to be shed,

¹ Lev. xvii. 11. ² Dillmann, in *Bibel Lex.*, vol. iv. p. 341.

³ Acts xv. 20–29.

either by man or beast, without a penalty. God had already proclaimed the sanctity of human life by the sign given to Cain, to preserve him,¹ and by the prohibition of the use of blood as food; but this additional law now made it specially sacred and inviolable. For the life that is taken, He declares He will demand that of the beast or of the man who has taken it. Life is to be paid for life. Society is possible only when the person is safe, and hence in this fundamental law, the corner stone of human progress and social life was firmly laid at the very hour of the new birth of the world.

This first covenant between God and man was confirmed by a sign worthy of a transaction so unique. The rainbow had glittered on the clouds for immeasurable ages before man's creation, but it was now to be adopted as a Divine pledge of goodwill to our race. Other covenants would be made with Abraham and with Moses, but they were sealed only by a personal or passing pledge; this, had a perennial sign in heaven vouchsafed it. The simplicity of the language used is only equalled by its beauty. "When I bring a cloud over the earth," and cause it to rain, "the bow shall be on the cloud, and I will look on it; that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature," and stay the rain, "that it become no more a flood like that which has just ended." The sacredness of the rainbow has passed, from this consecration, into the religions and poetry of all nations. Homer tells us that Jupiter set it in the clouds for a sign.² In the so-called Field of the Magi, in Persia, there may still be seen a picture cut into a rock, showing a winged boy sitting on a rainbow, and an old man before it in the attitude of prayer.³ The

¹ Gen. iv. 15.

² *Iliad*, xi. 47; xvii. 547.

³ Rosenmüller, *Das Alte und Neue Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 43.

Greeks fabled Iris, who brought messages from God to man, as the rainbow. The old Scandinavians, and perhaps the Germans, fancied it a bridge built by God to link heaven and earth. But in Genesis the symbol is grandly monotheistic and spiritual. The rainbow is the pledge of friendship between God and man, the token of Divine grace and pity, the assurance of preserving care. Appearing only when the sun has finally broken through the clouds, it is, moreover, a special sign that the watery destruction which the clouds held in their bosom is already turned aside.

The only additional mention we have of Noah is apparently given to introduce the historical notice of his descendants. Having betaken himself after the Flood to the growth of the vine,¹ it became, we are told, the occasion of revealing in his son Ham a trait in which the patriarch read the unworthy future of the offender's posterity. In the want of modest shame, and the hint of impurity and sensualism in family life, thus disclosed, Noah's prophetic glance saw the characteristics of Ham's son, Canaan, and his descendants, and foretold the debasement that would surely follow: "He would be cursed, and would be a servant of servants to his brethren." But this implied the continued guilt of his race, for the curse of God falls only on those that hate Him.² The reverent modesty of Shem and Japheth, in the same way, foreshadowed the better future before their children. The moral and intellectual peculiarities of a race are, perhaps, only the perpetuation of those of their first ancestors: the moral features stamped as abidingly as the physical or intellectual. Permanence of type is recognised in the

¹ This was probably in Armenia, the native country of the plant. Tristram's *Nat. Hist.*, p. 403.

² Exod. xx, 5.

lower creatures, and it is natural that it should be a law among mankind. To Shem and Japheth, therefore, their father's visions of the future revealed a far different picture from that prepared for the descendants of Ham. From Shem were to spring Israel and the races most closely connected with the earthly kingdom of God; from Ham, among others, the Canaanitish nations, contrasted most strongly to the Chosen People in history, religion and morals; but the descendants of Japheth, rough, indeed, like the northern regions they were to choose, yet uncorrupted and vigorous, were to press even into the bounds of the Semitic stock. History verifies the complete fulfilment of the patriarchal prediction. The glory of Shem, as the fountain head of the religion of mankind, needs no illustration; and the race of Canaan sank before the descendants of Japheth, in even their earliest settlements in the islands of the Levant, and on the coasts of Asia and of other lands.¹

A point so interesting demands attention to the precise words employed. The future of the race of Shem is illustrated, in the patriarch's mind, by their happiness in knowing the true God. He is the God of Shem, and as such, will, Himself, be their exceeding great reward. As to Japheth, as he and Shem had acted together, like true sons, their history would also in a measure blend. "God give wide bounds to Japheth,"² says the seer. "He shall dwell in the tents of Shem"—that is, he shall have part in Shem's blessing; for the God of Shem will

¹ Knobel's *Die Genesis* (1875), p. 172.

² Nöldeke, in *Bibel Lex.*, art. Japheth, explains this—"God gives him prosperity, that is, wide bounds, in contrast to contracted, which imply the opposite of prosperity." The pronoun "He," in what follows, Nöldeke understands of God. "Yet, the greatest blessing will remain with Shem, for God will dwell in his tents."

also be *his* God. How the nations sprung from Japheth stretched from Judea to the Atlantic; how they now reach across it to the New World, and have founded empires in the wide Southern Ocean; how, moreover, the religion of Shem has been their heritage also, is part of history.

The Table of Nations descended from Noah, given in the tenth chapter of Genesis, is the fitting sequel to the story of the great patriarch. At first sight it seems only a dry catalogue, but, on closer examination, it presents a view of the populations of early antiquity, than which nothing could be more interesting, or more instructive.

The use of the word "sons" in this table of peoples, is in accordance with the universal practice in the East, of speaking of tribes or nations as "the sons" of some recognised ancestor. Thus, in the Bible we have the "sons of Israel" for the Hebrews; the "sons of Judah" for the tribe of that name; the "sons of Ammon" for Ammonites; the "sons of Ishmael" for the Arabs. That nations rather than individuals are indicated by the names in the table is seen from many of them being in the plural—as Rodanim, the Rhodians; Kittim, the inhabitants of Cyprus; while "Mizraim," the name for Egypt throughout Scripture, is in the dual, in recognition of the Upper and Lower Kingdoms into which the valley of the Nile was always divided, as shown by the two crowns of the kings sculptured on the monuments, and by the hieroglyph for Egypt—a double water-plant, or a double clod of land.¹ Many of the names, besides, are used throughout Scripture as those of nations.² Asshur is usually translated by "Assyria," Elam by "Persia," Madai

¹ Rawlinson's *Origin of Nations*, p. 167.

² 1 Kings xxii. 48, etc. Ezek. xxvii. 7-15; xxxviii. 2-6.

by the "Medes," or "Media"; Cush by "Ethiopia," Lud by "Lydia," and Aram by "Syria."

The descent of all mankind from Noah is, of course, a renewed testimony by Scripture to the unity of the human race—a doctrine so intimately connected with the Divine plan of Redemption, and so vital to the brotherhood and mutual sympathy of man with man.

The distribution of the various nations and tribes to the respective sons of Noah, has been thought by some to be based on the three great distinctions of colour—Shem being assumed to stand for the red or brown races, Ham for the dark or black, and Japheth for the fair or white.¹ Others, however, regard the list as drawn up in reference to the geographical position of the different nations or tribes.² But it is certain, that mere geographical relations do not explain all the characteristics of the list; for while the classification by distinct origin may not in every instance be capable of proof, it is indisputable in the case of many.

Beginning with the descendants of Japheth, the table opens with the name of GOMER, the Cimmerians of antiquity, the Cimbri of Roman times, and the Cymry or Celts of still existing communities. Their original seat, in the farthest north known to the Hebrews or Greeks, is alluded to in the Odyssey.³

The shores of deep Oceanus;
Of the Cimmerian men the race and town

¹ Knobel (*Völkertafel*, p. 22) derives Japheth from Yaphah, "to be beautiful" and, hence, "white"—that colour being thought the ideal of beauty. Ham means "hot," and thus refers to the countries where men are darkest. Jewish expositors, says Knobel, understand Shem to include the races of intermediate shades. Shem means "a name," "renown."

² So Merx and Nöldeke.

³ xi. 14-19. Mordaunt Barnard's translation.

Were there, in mist and cloud enwrapped ; the sun
 Never looks down upon them with its rays ;
 Nor when it marches up the starry skies,
 Nor when from heaven it turns again to earth ;
 But over wretched men sad night is spread.

This dismal description refers to the country north of the Black Sea, to the Crimea, and the shores of the Sea of Azoff. The Black Sea, indeed, bore the name of The Cimmerian in antiquity, and other parts in these regions equally mark the local predominance of the Cymric race. The name Crimea itself is, in fact, a corruption from theirs. Warlike and fierce from the remotest ages, ancient history often records their inroads on more civilized regions ; as in Ezekiel,¹ where they are predicted as coming on a war of desolation from the extreme north, in alliance with other nations. The invasions of Asia Minor, by a part of them, driven from their homes by the Scythians, were a standing alarm for seven centuries before Christ. But the larger and braver half clung to the remote regions they had always held, amidst the shades of woods which stretched, unbroken, to the Hercynian Forest in Germany. Latterly, the peninsula of Jutland became their chief seat, and was known by their name ; but they spread to France, Spain and Britain, and still show their splendid vitality in the Celtic populations of Western Europe, including our own islands. The Welsh, indeed, call themselves Cymry, and Cumberland still perpetuates the remembrance of their having long held it against the English tribes from Germany.²

Three races are named as the "sons" of Gomer,—Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah,—which are not easily

¹ xxxviii. 2-6.

² "Gomer" by Kneucker, in *Bibel Lex.* Knobel's *Völkertafel*, pp. 22-32. Rawlinson's *Origin of Nations*. Bunsen's *Bibel Urkunden*, vol i. p. 64. Vaibinger, in Herzog's *Encyc.*, art. Gomer.

identified. ASHKENAZ, however, seems to mean "the horse-milkers," and, if so, may point to a race of nomades like the modern Tartars, or the ancient Scythians; roaming the steppes of upper western Asia, in the neighbourhood of the Cimmerians, and allied to them in blood. It may be that we have traces of it in the river *Ascanius* in Asia Minor, and in the names *Scandia* and *Scandinavia*, but this is doubtful. RIPHATH has some resemblance to the name of the fabled Rhiphæan mountains, in whose caves the north wind was born, and which the Greeks placed to the north of the known world. But there is greater probability that the conjecture is right which connects them with the mountain chain Riphates, a snowy range in Armenia, beyond the Tigris. TOGARMAH is mentioned by Ezekiel,¹ as a people trading in horses and mules at the fairs of Tyre, and as allied with Gomer, or the Cimbri, in an approaching invasion of Palestine. In this connection it is noteworthy that the Armenians, the Georgians, and the races of the Caucasus, still trace their descent, through one Torgona, from Gomer, and still call themselves "The House of Torgona," or as we have it, Togarmah. These races are all Indo-Germanic, or Aryan.

MAGOG, second of the "sons" of Japheth, occurs elsewhere in Scripture as the name of a country, in connection with Gog, the prince of tribes known as Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal;² the two latter named in Genesis as the fifth and sixth "sons" of Japheth. Hence, it would almost seem as if Magog had been a vague term among the Hebrews for the barbarous races of northern Asia; like the name "Scythians" among the Greeks.

¹ xxvii. 14; xxxviii. 6.

² Ezek. xxxviii. 2; xxxix. 1. The word translated "chief," is really a proper name, Rosh.

Jerome, indeed, gives it as the opinion of the Jews of his day, that it meant the "terrible and countless Scythian nations," and while Knobel further identifies it with the Slavs of to-day, Gesenius and others understand by רוש, the modern Russians. Ezekiel describes the four as, alike, a wild and terrible race of mounted men¹ armed with the bow; a description which suits the Scythians who invaded Palestine in B.C. 625. But the name was also applied to other peoples, for TUBAL and MESHECH appear not only as barbarian warriors, riding on steppe horses; but, in some branches of their stock, at least, as a trading people, who brought vessels of iron and copper to Tyre for sale.² Tubal, in fact, is simply the Persian word for brass or copper,³ and Meshech is thought by some to be the neighbouring people, the Chalybes, who were especially known in antiquity for their copper mining.⁴ It seems to support this explanation, that Herodotus mentions the Tibarenes and the Moschi together, as nations living south-east of the Black Sea, and says that they worked copper mines, and were included in the nineteenth satrapy of the kingdom of Darius.⁵ The Assyrian inscriptions, moreover, speak of a people and land of Muski, in North Assyria, which there is hardly room to doubt is the Meshech of Scripture.⁶

The MADAI, who come next in order in the list, bear the very name by which the Medes are known on the Assyrian monuments, and in the great inscription of

¹ xxxviii. 15; xxxix. 3.

² Ezek. xxvii. 13.

³ Hitzig, On Ezek. xxvii.

⁴ Xen. *Anab.*, v. 5, 1.

⁵ *Herod.*, iii. 94; vii. 78.

⁶ Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das A. T.*, pp. 12, 13.

Darius. JAVAN, the next, is the land of the Greeks, or Ionians, in a wide sense, which it is curious to notice is also repeated in the Assyrian tablets, with hardly any change, as Javanu; a term also used by Darius the Mede.¹ TIRAS, the seventh "son" of Japheth, is not so easy to identify. It has been thought by many, both in ancient and modern times, to refer to the inhabitants of Thrace, which anciently embraced the whole country lying north of the Sea of Marmora, and of the Ægean Archipelago. The latest explanation, however, seems the best. It supposes the name to apply to the Tursenoi, Tursci, or Tusci, a branch of the Etruscan race, in their earlier northern settlements, before they advanced into Italy. They were known in remote antiquity as seafarers and sea robbers, not only in the Italian seas, but also, as Tyrsenian Pelasgi, in the Greek Archipelago. It is curious to find that this people invaded Egypt, in alliance with the Achæans, the Lydians, the Sicilians, the Sardinians and other tribes, so long ago as the fourteenth century before Christ.²

This exhausts the seven "sons" or immediate descendants of Japheth, but a further list of nations or tribes which sprang from Javan, or the Greeks, is added,³ as in the case of Gomer. Of ELISHAH, the first of these, Ezekiel speaks as inhabiting a coast land of the Mediterranean, from which the famous purple dye was brought to Tyre. The fact that the sea-snail which yielded this was found not only on the coasts of Laconia, but in the Gulf of Corinth, and at various islands of the Grecian Archipelago—when coupled with the name of the district of Elis, in the Peloponnesus, seems to indicate that as

¹ Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das A. T.*, p. 13.

² Chabas, *Études de l'antiquité historique*. Paris, 1873.

³ Ezek. xxvii. 7.

the land intended. Elishah is, however, translated in the Syriac Bible, a "province in Italy," and its being mentioned in connection with Tarshish, and with Kittim, which sometimes stands for all the Greek territory, has led some to think it more probable that in the list in Genesis it is the name of Sicily.

TARSHISH, which comes next, is doubtless the famous Phenician port in Spain, outside the Straits of Gibraltar, between the two mouths of the Guadalquiver,¹ or "great river." The name Tarshish, however, strikingly corroborates the statement in the Table of the settlement having been first made by a race of Aryan, or Japhetic extraction, for it has been found to be only a form of the Sanscrit or Aryan word, Tarîscha—"the sea," or the "sea coast," and this meaning is affirmed by an old tradition of the Rabbins to have been for ages applied to it. Thus, before the Phenicians settled in the region, another race had given it a name which these adopted, and which was afterwards applied to the whole district. In Knobel's opinion the original colonists were an offshoot of the Etruscans, before they had finally made Italy their chief seat.²

It is curious to look back through long ages at these ancient movements of men, and notice the attractions which drew them to particular spots. Thus Tarshish was famous from the earliest antiquity for the abundance of silver and other metals yielded by its mines; and no less for its corn. Already in the time of Solomon,³ a

¹ Guadalquiver is the name given to the river by the Arabs while they were in Spain. They had no word for a river in our sense and called it "G'dol-keber," "the great wady," or water-course. Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 16. In Brockhaus' *Lexicon*, however, it is derived from Wad-al-Kebir = the great river.

² *Völkertafel*, p. 86.

³ B.C. 1015-975.

thousand years before Christ, the huge vessels which sailed to it were known as Tarshish ships, as in later days we spoke of "Indiamen," and the name even came to be applied to any very large merchantmen, to whatever port they sailed.¹ From the busy wharves of Tarshish, huge cargoes were borne away, of iron, tin, silver, lead, and other commodities, including, at least in later times, consignments of delicate lampreys, and heavy freights of wheat; for which, doubtless, Tarshish received a proportionate importation of the productions of the East. The world was as busy then as now; the fisher with his net, the miner with his pick, the sailor with his vessel, the smith with his hammer, the jeweller with his art, and countless others, each in his way.

By KITTIM or CHITTIM, the next in the list of the "sons" of Javan, that is of the offshoots of the Greek stem, a people is indicated whose country is described as an island or coast land. The "islands of Chittim" are, indeed, frequently mentioned in Scripture.² It was at them that the Syrian homeward bound fleet heard of the fall of their great city, and it was thither that the Tyrians fled for refuge.³ Josephus,⁴ in the generation after Christ, had already identified the name with that of Cyprus, and gives, as a proof, that of a Cyprian town—Kittion or Citium, adding that the same name was then used, in a wider sense, of other islands, and of "the greater part of the coast lands" of the

¹ Thus the ships navigating the Red Sea, and trading to Ophir (South Arabia), are called "Tarshish ships." Isa. xxiii. 1, 14. 1 Kings ix. 28; x. 22; xx. 49. ² Chron. ix. 21; xx. 36, 37. Luther calls these vessels "Sea-ships," using the name Tarshish in its Sanscrit sense of "the sea," which is adopted also by the Vulgate, the Septuagint, and the Syriac.

³ Jer. ii. 10.

⁴ Isa. xxiii. 1-12.

⁴ *Ant.* i. 6, 1.

Mediterranean. "It is especially used," adds another ancient, who himself lived in Cyprus,¹ "of the Cyprians and Rhodians, and also of the Macedonians, because these were of the Cyprian or Rhodian stock."

The last name in this part of the Table in the Hebrew Bible has been changed, by the substitution of one letter for another very like it, to Dodanim, instead of RODANIM;—the correct form in the Greek Old Testament and other ancient versions. It stands, without doubt, for the Greek inhabitants of the Island of Rhodes, which was reckoned one of the isles of the Chittim, with whom the Rhodians were counted; and next after whom, therefore, they are appropriately introduced.

This closes the descendants of Japheth, who are thus distributed, in their earliest history, over the regions known to the Hebrews in the extreme north; from Central Asia and Armenia, to the wild forest regions north of the Black Sea and the Egean, and also to Greece; while their descendants are represented as spreading to Sicily, to Spain, and to the large islands of the Eastern Mediterranean. The exact correspondence of this with the latest results of ethnological science is very striking.

The "sons" of Ham follow those of Japheth; the word Ham itself meaning in Hebrew, warm, or hot, and hence the South. It is also an Egyptian word, and was the common name among the Nile population for their country, from the "black" or dark colour of the soil.² Ham is represented as the father of the southern or dark and black races, in contrast to Japheth, from whom the

Epiphanius, died A.D. 403. *Hær.*, xxx. 25.

² The words alchemy and chemistry preserve, in our own language, this meaning of Ham or Cham. They literally mean "the black art" from Kemia—Chem—black. They came to us through the Arabs, from Egypt.

northern nations sprang, while those between are traced to Shem.

Four great races or "sons" are assigned to this division of mankind,—“Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.” Of these, CUSH was the old Egyptian name for the region between the cataracts of the Nile and Abyssinia, and for the peoples, other than negroes, south of Egypt. It is thus nearly identical with the present Nubia, and with the earlier use of the name Ethiopia by the Greeks. The dark tribes on both sides of the Arabian Gulf were, however, known as Ethiopians, and Herodotus even speaks of an Asiatic branch of the race. Indeed, in Homer, this name is applied to all the races and lands of the then known southern parts of the world; and, in the same way, Cush was a general term among the ancient Hebrews for the same countries and races:¹ for the peoples named in the Table as sprung from Cush include dwellers in Southern Asia as well as in Africa.² But these continents, it must not be forgotten, were not as yet sharply discriminated, in the earliest times; for even Herodotus reckons Egypt as in Asia, though he feels the difficulty of such a division. Even as late as about Christ's day, geographers spoke of the “Cussites” of the territory of Susiana, beyond the Tigris and Euphrates. Nimrod, moreover, a “son” of Cush, is handed down to us as the first king of Babel and the district round it. It may be, also, that the Mesopotamian king, Cushan Rishathaim, of the time of the Judges, marks the survival of a Cushite kingdom³ in that region, to a comparatively modern date. There is still, moreover, a province of Persia, on the mouth of the Euphrates, bearing the significant name of Khuzistan.

In a narrower sense, Cush is used in the Bible, much

¹ Gen. ii. 13.

² Gen. x. 7.

³ Judges iii. 8.

as it was by the ancient Egyptians, for the region south of the cataracts of the Nile,¹ including Kordofan, along with Abyssinia, the present Nubia, and part of Sennaar. This great stretch of country was, anciently, far less confused in its ethnography than it is to-day; for countless changes have produced a variety of mixed races, of mingled Cushite, Semitic, and negro origin. There are, however, no traces of this in early antiquity, for there is no mention, in the Old Testament, of Semitic races in these regions; though Herodotus, in the fifth century before Christ, speaks of Arabs, along with African Ethiopians, in the army of Xerxes.² Nor is there any hint of the presence of the negro race; for even the Egyptian monuments show a marked distinction between the Ethiopians, and the negroes on the west of their country. Like all the peoples already mentioned in the Table of Nations, the Cushites belonged to the Caucasian race. It is true that the Ethiopic language, in use through later ages, is essentially Semitic; but this may be explained from the Ethiopian races having mingled with Semitic ones in Arabia,³ and adopted their language; as the Normans adopted the French, or as Latin became the language of many countries under the Romans. Indeed, there are still tribes undoubtedly representing the old Cushites, whose language is equally distinct from the Semitic of Abyssinia on the one hand, and from the negro languages on the other, and whose physical characteristics clearly distinguish them from both. The typical African generally, in fact, is very different from the negro, whose peculiarities were apparently first due to local influences and social degeneracy.⁴ Mere colour is no index of race, for the Jew is of every complexion accord-

¹ Ezek. xxix. 10.

² Knobel, *Völkertafel*, p. 257.

³ Herod., vii. 69.

⁴ See p. 157.

ing to the climate he inhabits, from the darkness of a Hindoo to the fairness of a Dane.¹

Five races are named as springing from the Cushite stem—"Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah, and Sabtechah." Of these, SEBA, "The Men," is said by Josephus² to be the ancient kingdom of Meroë, shut in, like an island, by branches of the Nile; and this identification is generally accepted as correct. It thus formed part of the present Nubia, immediately north of Kordofan, Senaar, and Abyssinia: a position which, in antiquity, lay in the direct caravan-route between Arabia and India on the one hand, and Africa on the other, and brought wealth and prosperity to the country at large, especially to the towns. There are only two notices of Seba in Scripture; the one stating that its people were famous for their stature,³ and the other speaking of them as strong and brave, "a people terrible from of old," who broke in pieces all who opposed them, and whose land was rich in streams.⁴ Herodotus describes them, very similarly, as the tallest and handsomest of men, choosing their king for his stature and strength, and living often to the age of a hundred and twenty.⁵

HAVILAH, a name associated with the description of Eden, seems to have been applied, also, by the ancients to another widely distant region. Even in his day, Niebuhr

¹ When Jeremiah says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" (xiii. 23) there is no necessary implication that the race was negro; for there are still African races in these very parts, who while in some cases very dark, and in others black, have neither the features, the shape of skull, nor the woolly hair of the negro.

² *Ant.*, ii. 10, 2.

³ Isa. xlv. 14.

⁴ Isa. xviii. 2, 7. The translation given is that of Gesenius. See his JESAJA, on the verses. It is also, in effect, that of Knobel.

⁵ *iii.* 20, 21.

found a place near the coast of the Persian Gulf, bearing the name of Huwaila, but this does not suit the mention of Havilah in connection with Ethiopian races dwelling in Africa. It seems rather to have been the region now known as Yemen, in South-western Arabia, where there was a place still known in Roman times as Uaila. It may, however, have been an African region at the mouth of the Red Sea, where the ancients named a bay Avalites. In either case it would lie in close neighbourhood to Seba.

SABTAH may perhaps be identified with the old Arab trading town of Sabbatha, or Sabota, which lay to the east of Yemen, the Havilah of many. If so, we only know that its chief city had in later times sixty temples, and that the trade in incense was kept jealously as its monopoly. RAAMAH was, possibly, the country lying still farther east than Sabtah, and reaching to the Persian Gulf, where there was formerly a place called Regma, the form in which the Greek Bible gives the name. SABTECHAH is fancied to have been a land still more easterly, forming the new Persian province of Caramania, opposite Regma, on the other side of the Persian Gulf. From Raamah two peoples are given as offshoots, SHEBA and DEDAN, in the former of which we can hardly be wrong in seeing the Sabæans of Arabia Felix, a nation famous in antiquity for their far reaching trade in the costly productions of their country—incense, balsam, myrrh, etc.¹ Such a commerce led to their being held as the richest nation of ancient times, and this added to the excitement caused by a visit of a Sabæan queen to Solomon, which is noticed minutely in the sacred history.² Her coming was in fact, in the eyes of the Israelites, one of the greatest honours that could have been paid to the house

¹ Job vi. 19. Ezek. xxvii. 22; xxxviii. 13.

² 1 Kings x. 1. 2 Chron. ix. 1.

of David. It was hence natural that Isaiah, in painting the glory of Messianic times, should speak of Sheba as bringing gold and incense in tribute to him,¹ and that its gold should be specially named by the Psalmist in a similar connection.²

DEDAN, which is always mentioned with Sheba, was the wide region of Arabia, north of the latter; gradually reaching, indeed, by the advance of the population, to the southern limits of Edom.³ It is curious that we find another Dedan, and also another Sheba, among the descendants of Abraham.⁴ This apparently rises from the peoples of both Dedan and Sheba having gradually spread northwards, first in caravan journeys, and finally in permanent settlements, among the tribes descended from Abraham, who lived in these parts; till the whole became a mixed race to which the common names still clung.⁵ Nimrod, another descendant of Cush, will come before us hereafter.

¹ Isa. lx. 6. ² Ps. lxxii. 15. ³ Jer. xlix. 8. ⁴ Gen. xxv. 3.

⁵ Schrader, in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*. Steiner, in Schenkel's *Bibel Lexicon*.





CHAPTER XVI.

THE TABLE OF NATIONS.

MIZRAIM, the name of the second son of Ham, was that given to "the two Egypts," from the oldest times, among all Semitic nations; though they seem strictly to have applied it only to what is now Lower Egypt; dividing that into two districts: the Upper province being shut out from the knowledge of the ancient world till after the Persian invasion. It means "the fortified" or "shut in," in apparent allusion to the strong military wall which, for no less than 170 miles, protected the Nile valley from the Asiatic tribes.¹ The physical characteristics of the Egyptians, their language, and even their ideas, show that they were a branch of the Caucasian race;² immigration from the south, and the presence of aboriginal tribes, which led to a gradual mixture of blood, explaining the fact that the mummies and pictures of the earlier ages are nearest the Caucasian type, and further from the African than those of later date. It is impossible, indeed, to look at the old sculptures and

¹ Ebers' *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 79. Ebers thinks there were two walls, and that the dual form of the name may perhaps, have referred to these.

² See especially Eber's *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, pp. 40-54.

paintings without feeling that they represent a people kindred to our own. There is, for example, in the Louvre collection, a figure of a scribe, of extreme antiquity, and in it the features are perfectly European, while the colour of the skin is a soft but light red. The kings, priests and soldiers particularly, who alone kept their blood pure, show that the race had come from the same home in which the Semitic stock had first lived.

Seven races or "sons" are traced to Mizraim, of which the first is the LUDIM,—meaning, like Seba, "The Men,"—and supposed to have been either the Egyptians themselves, or the Berbers of North Africa. The former opinion is supported by Ebers with much ingenuity, and certainly no people could have more haughtily fancied themselves men above all, than one which, like the Egyptians, despised every other race. "They held themselves," says Herodotus, "the best of all men."¹

The ANAMIM are believed by Ebers and Brugsch to have been the same as the Amu; a Semitic tribe of shepherds who had settled in the flat and marshy pastures of the lower Delta and in part of the eastern side of Middle Egypt.² But the identification is, at best, only a conjecture.

The LEHABIM were the same race as the Lubim³ or Libyans,⁴ of other parts of Scripture, and the Lubu of the Egyptian monuments. On these they are described as the people living to the west of Egypt, and extending thence, under the general name of the Temhu, "to the outspread ocean" and "the setting sun." The Libyans of early ages were, strictly, the tribes inhabiting the region west of the Nile, from the coast of the Mediterranean to a considerable distance south, along the

¹ *Herod.*, ii. 121.

² *Ægypten*, etc., p. 103.

³ 2 Chron. xii. 3; xvi. 8. Nahum iii. 9. ⁴ In the Septuagint.

vast northern edge of Africa. They are represented on the monuments as bright-skinned, tattooed, clad in variegated coats, with pointed beards and marked Caucasian features; and indeed, were spoken of in Thebes and in the Delta, as "the white men of the west." Ebers has collected striking evidence to show that they originally came from the islands of the Mediterranean; attracted, it may be, by the fertility of the African coast, which the abundant ruins, still seen, attest to have been once far greater than it is now. Yet the Hebrew name Lehabim, like that given them by the Egyptians, means the inhabitants of a dry and thirsty land; so that, except a narrow fringe on the coast, the land must always have been comparatively desert.

The NAPHTUCHIM and PATHRUSIM are simply the ancient territories of Memphis and Thebes, in their sacred name, as opposed to that used by the people—for every Egyptian town had two names, a sacred and a profane. Memphis and its district are mentioned first, perhaps from their higher antiquity; for Thebes, and the religion so zealously cultivated in its temples, rose to fame at a later period than the city of the Pyramid kings. The Pathrusim were the inhabitants of the city and district of the god Pa-Hathor; the Naphtuchim, those of the city and district of the god Ptah, but in neither case are we to think of any race distinct from the Egyptians around.

The CASLUHIM have been identified, with striking completeness, as a community which had settled in the district reaching from the eastern limits of the Nile overflow, along the sea coast, to the south borders of Palestine. Here lay, to the west of the "River of Egypt,"—now Wady el Arîsh—and of the Serbonian bogs and Mount Casios,—a dry region, efflorescent with salt, which poisoned the soil and left only isolated spots fit for

culture. The salt, however, was an important article of commerce, for the Phenicians in the north, and in the Delta, were the great fish-salters of antiquity; and though the Egyptians abhorred sea-fish as unclean, and salt itself; Africa, as a whole, must have needed it in great quantities, and it could be readily transported in every direction, since the great road between Asia and Africa ran through the midst of the salt-producing district. The name Casluhim was, indeed, given the people, from Mount Casios in their territory; the Kas-lokh, or "dry" "burnt up hill" of the ancient Egyptians. They seem, according to Ebers, to have been of Phenician origin, but had become thoroughly Egyptian in their thoughts and ways.

In the CAPHTORIM, Ebers recognises settlements of Phenicians in the remotest ages on the edge of the Delta, before the Egyptians themselves had spread so far northwards; Kaft being the Egyptian name for that people and their colonies. He supposes that they first held the islands of the Greek Archipelago, including Crete, and thence emigrated to the Nile Delta; and supports this view with much learning. The Philistines, who are said in The Table to have entered Palestine from the land of the Casluhim, but in other passages to have come from the island of Caphtor or Crete, he regards as the remains of a powerful branch of the Caphtorim, who, reaching Egypt first, necessarily advanced towards Palestine, their final home, through the lands of the Casluhim. It is pleasant to see the accuracy of Scripture even in a point so minute as the movements of a tribe in the earliest antiquity, thus vindicated by modern scientific research. The old Jewish authorities, it may be added, read "inhabitants of Damietta," that is, of the coasts of the Delta, for Caphtorim.

This allusion to the migrations of tribes in the dawn of history, slight and brief though it be, throws a strange light on the greatest step in the progress of our race—the introduction of the alphabet. During their long settlement in Egypt, the Phenicians learned to represent sounds, by signs taken from the hieratic or priestly writing of Egypt; and these were carried first to Palestine, and spread thence to all the nations of the east and west. Originally from an island in the Persian Gulf, this race early launched out on the Mediterranean which washed the shores of their home at the foot of Lebanon, and spread, on the one hand, to the islands of the Levant and the Egean, and, on the other, to the still uninhabited but rich coasts of the Egyptian Delta. There the fisheries forthwith opened a new branch of industry to a people with an instinctive genius for commerce. The salt of the land of the Casluhim and of Libya enabled them to begin fish-salting factories, like their brethren at Sidon in the north,—for “Sidon” means, according to some, simply the “fishing” place, though, according to others, it refers to the fact that one of the principal Phenician gods had the form of a fish. Settlements on the coast ere long spread to the south; for the Phenician was even more famous as a farmer than as a trader. The Nile mouths were then choked with the papyrus and other water plants which have now retreated to the south of Nubia. Huge crocodiles, hippopotami, and other great beasts abounded, and the reeds gave shelter to immense flocks of birds of many kinds. But the Egyptians from the south, and the Phenicians from the north, clearing their way, like the pioneers of to-day in the American bush, ere long met, and then began the familiar intercourse, to which, in the alphabet, we owe so much.

In PHUT or PUT, the third “son” of Ham, we may

recognise the country known in the hieroglyphics as Punt,—the modern Turkish province of Hejaz,—running back from the coast of the Red Sea, on the north half of its eastern side. The people of Punt sold themselves largely as mercenaries to Tyre and other powers; taking part, for example, under the standard of Egypt, in the battle of Carchemish,¹ though at other times fighting against her. They were also famous as traders in the markets of Tyre, sending thither the produce of their turquoise mines, which were famous over the world, and exporting large quantities of incense, for which their country bore a high repute. The inscriptions and pictures on the monuments represent them as wandering tribes of a deep brown colour, and strictly distinguish them from the settled Cushites, on whose confines they lived. Indeed, the name Punt, which means “flight,” accurately marks their nomadic habits.

From CANAAN, the third “son” of Ham, the next on the list, no fewer than eleven peoples are named as directly or indirectly descended; Sidon, the first home of the Phenicians on the coast of Palestine, being justly represented as the earliest branch, or “first-born.”

The name Canaan was itself originally applied to the Phenicians only, apparently by themselves, and to the sea-coast plain at the foot of Lebanon, on which Sidon, their earliest settlement, was built; with, perhaps, the fertile plain of Esdraelon and the fringe of level shore stretching southwards, towards Egypt. In the time of Moses and Joshua, however, it included the whole country on the west of the Jordan, but it never crossed that river. It means “the lowland,” although, from the keen genius for trading peculiar to the Phenicians, a

¹ Jer. xlv. 9. Ezek. xxvii. 10; xxx. 5. For Libya the Hebrew has Phut.

“Canaanite” afterwards became equivalent to a “trader.” The word Phenician itself means originally brown, or dark red, and rose from the colour of the race,¹ but among themselves they bore the name of Canaanites, of which their Carthaginian brethren still boasted in the days of Augustine.

The assignment of the Phenicians, by Genesis, to the Hamite division of mankind, has been regarded as a serious difficulty, since their language was almost identical with that of the Hebrews and would thus rank them among Semitic peoples. But the division of nations in the Scripture Table is not founded on scientific distinctions of language. It rightly assigns to the races descended from Japheth the north of the world as then known; to the descendants of Shem the central zone; and to those of Ham the wide regions of the extreme south. Language could not, originally, have been a certain test of origin, for in the remote ages, when mankind diverged from the common centre in Asia, the families of speech must have been less clearly defined than they gradually became. Hamitic races may still have spoken a Semitic language, and carried it with them in their wanderings.

Moreover, the original home of the Phenicians goes far to corroborate the Bible statement of their descent from Ham; for we first meet with them making their way from Southern Arabia to what are now called the Bahrein Islands in the Persian Gulf. The temples still standing on these islands in Roman times, were evidently Phenician, and the inhabitants claimed to be the original stock of the famous race of Palestine. Their next resting place, still pressing north, was on the flat shores of the Persian Gulf, at the mouth of the Euphrates, called by them

¹ Kneucker, *art.* Phönizien, in *Bibel Lex.*

originally Canaan, or, as they pronounced it Chna, the "low-lying;" the name afterwards transferred by them to their home at the foot of Lebauon. The Himyarites, a kindred Arab people, with a language akin to theirs and to the Hebrew, and known like them, from their complexion, as the "red," remained behind in South Arabia. But the "Canaanites" chose to migrate to the coast of Palestine, whence they spread, as we have seen, to Egypt among other places; remaining for centuries at the mouths of the Nile, till Egyptian arts, inventions, modes of thought and religious ideas became common to both races, and re-acted on Sidon and Tyre: the morals, the degraded worship, and even the style of art thus introduced to Palestine, becoming only too sad a confirmation in the minds of the Hebrews, of the common origin of Mizraim and the "Canaanite."¹

¹ Bertheau, *Geschichte der Israeliten*, p. 175, in his very full examination of this subject, says: "Under the Hamites we meet a number of peoples who spoke a language of the so-called Semitic stem. We must therefore say, that to give the name of Shemites to the races who spoke a tongue related to the Hebrew is contrary to the idea of Genesis, and bears in itself a false historical principle." As to the idea that the national hatred of the Canaanites led to their being assigned to Ham as their original, he shows that this hatred never led the Jews to disown tribes like Moab, Edom and Ammon, and that instead of hatred to Phenicia, there was friendship, culminating in the alliance between it and the kings of Judah. He adds: "Besides the inhabitants of Central and Northern Mesopotamia, all those people were reckoned Semitic who had spread from these parts, especially those who wandered to the south and south-west." If the reader wish to pursue the subject further, he will find it ably discussed in the arts. *Phönizien*, by Kneucker, and *Kanaan*, by Dillmann, in the *Bibel Lex.* of Schenkel; in Hitzig's *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, p. 26; in Knobel's *Völkertafel*, p. 305; in Knobel's *Genesis*, on the chapter; in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*; Von Bohlen's *Genesis*; Herzog's *Encyklopädie*, etc

The name HETH, which follows SIDON, was one of great dignity in the early history of Palestine. It is applied in the Assyrian inscriptions to all the "west peoples" of Syria,¹ as far as the sea coast, and in the same way the Egyptians knew Syria as the land of the "Cheta," or "Chatti." There, they were so strong, that one of their princes, alone, furnished a contingent of eighteen thousand troops, in the defence against Rameses II., whose triumph over the united forces of the race, reckoned his greatest achievement, is celebrated in lofty verse on no less than six different monuments and temples. But though the name be thus famous, the Hethites of Palestine, if of the same stock, must have been only a very limited and comparatively feeble tribe.² At the time of Abraham they lived at Hebron, and in that of Moses are found with the Amorites and Jebusites in the hill-country of Ephraim and Judah,³ while under Solomon they were compelled to do forced labour on the public works.⁴ Even so late as the times of Ezra, indeed, we find the Jews blamed for their connection with them.⁵

The JEBUSITES, next mentioned, took their name from Jebus, afterwards Jerusalem; the word Jebus meaning, apparently, in Canaanitish, "the waterless" hill; the town being named, as in later times, from the hill, as the site on which it was built.⁶ They belonged to the much divided Canaanitish people, seemingly holding only Jerusalem and the district immediately round it; but their bravery and warlike spirit enabled them, notwithstanding

¹ Schrader's *Keilinschriften*, pp. 27, 31. They extended from the Euphrates to Asia Minor.

² Ebers' *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 286. Bertheau, however, thinks the two peoples the same, *Bib. Lex.* art. Hethiter.

³ Gen. xxiii. Num. xiii. 29. Josh. xi. 3.

⁴ 1 Kings ix. 20.

⁵ Ezra ix. 1.

⁶ So, Zion was originally the hill of Jerusalem, not the town.

their limited population, to maintain their independence for centuries in the midst of the Israelitish invaders; nor were they subdued till the reign of David, who at last took their citadel.

The AMORITES appear elsewhere in Scripture, as another Canaanitish tribe living within the limits of Western Palestine. Their name shows them to have been "mountaineers," and their habit of building their towns on the top of the hills is recorded as having led the Hebrew spies to speak of them as "walled up to heaven." The prophet Amos describes them as a race of great stature,—tall as cedars and strong as oaks,¹—language which seems to connect them with the gigantic races of the Refaim and the sons of Anak.² We find them living, in Abraham's day, in the south of Palestine, at Hazezon Tamar—the Palm-rows—and at Hebron,³ but they also held part of Central Palestine.⁴ In the time of Moses they appear on the hills of Judah, as far as Selah, or Petra, to the south, and in the districts to the east of Jordan, held formerly by the Refaim and other tribes;⁵ where they had founded two strong kingdoms, ruled by Sihon and Og, extending from the river Arnon to the north of Bashan. It was to them, in league with other Canaanitish tribes, that Israel owed the repulse of its first attempt to enter Palestine from the south, and it was with them it had to fight for an entrance, a generation later, from the east of the Jordan. Sihon and Og, their kings in that region, were then crushed, and their country given to the Israelites; but the Amorites of the south were conquered only at a later time, by Judah. Those of Central Palestine kept possession of their towns even longer; but in the end, the wreck of the nation, with the surviving Canaanites of other tribes, were

¹ Amos ii. 9.

² Num. xiii. 33.

³ Gen. xiv. 7, 13.

⁴ Gen. xlviii. 22.

⁵ Gen. xiv. 5. Num. xiii. 30. Jud. i. 36.

forced to do service to Solomon.¹ Still, some remained even after the return of the Jews from exile, for Ezra expressly forbids marriages between them and the Israelites.

The GIRGASHITES lived somewhere in Central Palestine, but even Josephus could find no trace of them in his day.² There is an Armenian tradition, however, that they migrated, in the days of Joshua, to Armenia, and they have been thought, from this and the similarity of the words, to have been the progenitors of the Tcherkessen or Circassians, between the Black Sea and the river Kuban, —a fact which implies that they were not Semitic but Aryan.

The HIVITES appear in the days of the Patriarchs, at Shechem, and survived the doom pronounced against them when the land was conquered by Israel. The Gibeonites, who by their craft saved their lives, though made slaves for the service of the Tabernacle, were of this tribe. It is curious to notice that this incident reveals the existence of a republican form of government, by elders, at Gibeon, while the Hivites of Shechem appear as a free community under a prince: generous political ideas which seem to justify the usual derivation of the name of the tribe as meaning "the community."³ Nor were they confined to Palestine proper, for we find them on the southern slopes of Lebanon, and even as far north as Hamath on the Orontes. But they had sunk in Solomon's time to a feeble remnant, toiling, like the other remnants of their countrymen, in forced labour, at the public works of the haughty Sultan. From his reign their name is not mentioned.⁴

¹ 1 Kings ix. 20, 21.

² *Ant.*, i. 6. 2.

³ Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 341.

⁴ Jud. iii. 3. 1 Kings ix. 30.

The **ARKITES** were a small tribe of Canaanites living far to the north, on the coast of Palestine, about sixty miles beyond the present Beyrout. The name still clings there to the ruins of a town, in the midst of which rises a mound a hundred feet high, which was a fortress in the times of the crusades. The **SINITES** were an even more obscure tribe, who had a town called Sini, and a small district round it, on the western slope of the Lebanon chain, to the north of Arki; the old name lingering still, in the days of Jerome, though the town had perished. Two communities so comparatively feeble may have been mentioned from the fact that, according to Josephus, Arki was included in the limits of the tribe of Asher and was embraced in the kingdom of Solomon.¹ In the **ARVADITES** we have the population of the island town of Aradus, and of the island of that name on which it stood; a spot of only about four-fifths of a mile in circuit, off the Phenician coast, north of Tripolis; receiving its name, like Tyre, from islands in the Persian Gulf from which the populations of these places had originally come. The inhabitants of Aradus though bold sailors and brave soldiers, were as keen traders, and swarmed so thick in their little town that the houses had to be built storey on storey to accommodate them.² The island is now called Ruweida, and appears to have been entirely surrounded in ancient times with a wall of great hewn stones, and even to have had a double wall on its north and west sides.

The **ZEMARITES** were another Phenician tribe, which seems, beyond doubt, to have had its seat at the Phenician fortified town of Smyrna, near the river Eleutherus, at the western base of the Lebanon chain. The name, indeed, exactly suits the locality, for it is from the

¹ *Ant.*, i. 6, 2; v. 1, 22; viii. 2, 3. Compare Josh. xiii. 5; xix. 28.

² *Strabo*, xvi. 753.

Arabic, "samara" "to flow or rush down," and could not be more expressive of a population living on steep mountain slopes, amidst rushing hill streams. HAMATH, the last of the "sons" of Canaan, was a strong town on the Orontes, in the valley of Lebanon, and held for a time a not inconsiderable territory in subjection. It was originally, like Aradus, a Phenician colony, and was ruled by a king of its own in the time of David. From its position on the great line of Phenician trade with the Euphrates, Hamath early became rich, but it was taken by Jeroboam II. and annexed to the territory of Israel.

In this long list of Canaanitish peoples the names, with the exception of Sidon, run from the south to the north, and coincide with the limits of the Jewish kingdom, at least as originally designed. The specification of races by the sacred writer is naturally more minute in treating of the population of his own country.

The nations of Africa, Arabia, and Palestine, having been enumerated among the descendants of Ham; as those of Northern Asia and of Europe had been in connection with Japheth; those traced to Shem alone remain. Of these, the first is ELAM—the High Land—an extensive country on the east side of the lower Tigris, bordered on the west by the province of Babylon, on the north by Assyria and Media, and on the south by the Persian Gulf. It thus embraced parts of the present Laristan, Chusistan, and Arabistan; a picturesque, mountainous region: its capital, at least in later times, being the famous city of Shushan, so often mentioned in Daniel as a royal residence of the kings of Babylon, and in Esther as a favourite with the kings of Persia. Lying farthest to the south-east of the various Semitic nationalities, and bordering the Medes, who are with strict appropriateness assigned to the Japhetic or Indo-Germanic stock, Elam,

from the remotest ages, maintained a constant historical connection with its Semitic neighbours. It is not indeed known whether the Elamites spoke a distinctly Semitic language—that is, one related to the Syriac, Hebrew, Arabic, and Ethiopic; but the classification of mankind in The Table under three great divisions is based neither on the colour, nor on the grouping together of like languages according to their respective families, but on the historical relations of the various peoples. It has been thought by some that the Elamites may have spoken an Aryan rather than a Semitic language, but all proofs of this are wanting.¹ It is far more probable, that a people expressly named as Semitic in the Genesis list, and always from the earliest periods maintaining a historical connection with the other nations of that race, spoke a language related to the Assyrian and Babylonian—that is, one of the so-called Semitic languages. Nor would this be at all affected by the possibility that as Aryan races like the Persian pressed into the land, a mixed language may gradually have come to be spoken.² The incidental notice of Scripture is thus supported by historical probability of the strongest kind.

It is a curious evidence of the antiquity as well as correctness of the Table in Genesis, that though it mentions Elam, it knows nothing of Persia. The explanation lies in the fact, that till the rise of Cyrus in the sixth century before Christ, Persia was alike unimportant and unknown.

The second “son” of Shem mentioned,³ is the world-famous ASSHUR, or Assyria, a name already occurring in

¹ See the remarks of such an accomplished scholar as Schrader, art. Elam, Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*. Also Renan's *Histoire Générale des Langues Sémitiques*. 2nd ed. p. 41.

² Dillmann, in art. Elam, in *Bibel Lex.*

³ Gen. x. 22.

a preceding verse, where it is said, that Asshur went out of the land of Shinar and built Nineveh and other cities, or rather, as it should be read, "He, Nimrod, went out of that land (Babylon) into Assyria, and built Nineveh." That Babylon, as a kingdom, thus preceded Assyria, has been confirmed by the latest researches; and Assyrian tablets, recovered in such numbers from Nineveh, as well as the facial type of the people on the monuments, prove that the Bible rightly assigns the inhabitants to the Semitic branch of the Caucasian race. The language, indeed, was the same as that of Babylon, and the writing in use only that of the Babylonian district simplified, while even in religion the later state borrowed from the earlier. Strange to say—or, rather, not strange—although Scripture had for thousands of years described Assyria as of Semitic origin, the discoveries of recent years show that it would have been easy to have assigned it wrongly to another origin; for the rapid progress made in deciphering the arrow-headed writing peculiar to these regions, has shown that an earlier race—the Accadian—apparently of Turanian or Tartar origin, had first established themselves on the Euphrates, and introduced a culture and polity wonderfully developed for so remote an age. From them the Babylonians and Assyrians borrowed their writing, their earliest religion, and much else; so that it would have been natural to have spoken of them, rather than of a Semitic people, as founding Assyria, as was, however, the case. The Accadians were the old Babylonians, but Assyria was from the first Semitic. The word Assur, itself, is the name of the chief god of the Assyrians, as if they had deified their founder. The limits of ancient Assyria, at first, were very small; embracing nearly the same region as the Roman province of Adiabene, or

the southern part of the modern Turkish province of Kurdistan, far up towards the sources of the Tigris, and immediately south of ancient Armenia—that is, on a line with the modern Aleppo, and the south coast of Asia Minor. It was thus, to the Hebrews in Palestine, at all times, a strictly northern power, and is constantly spoken of as such in the Prophets.

It has been a much disputed question, how races of so-called different stems, like the Cushite Babylonians and the Semitic Assyrians, spoke the same language; but the difficulty seems to rise from the improper use of the expression “Semitic.” A number, if not the majority of the peoples traced in Genesis to Ham, in particular the Cushites, spoke languages of this class. The Hebrew, in fact, was originally only the idiom of the Canaanites, a population especially Hamite. Isaiah even calls it “the language of Canaan.”¹ It was from living for generations among the Canaanites, that Abraham and his descendants adopted it instead of the language which they formerly spoke: a dialect most probably nearer the Arabic, if we may judge from the original relations of Heber, the founder of the Hebrews, and Joktan, the ancestor of the Arab race.² The separation of the tribes which became the ancestors of the Cushites, from the others of the same stock, who are called the ancestors of the Semitic race, —the former abandoning nomadic habits, the latter retaining them—was thus the division known as that of the descendants of Ham from those of Shem. The former went off to the south and west, the others to the north and east,—though all were members of the same original family, speaking the same language in different dialects, and professing the same religion under different symbols. It is not too much, therefore, to speak of

¹ Isa. xix. 18.

² Lenormant, *La Magie, etc.* p. 277.

them ethnographically as a common family¹—the Syro-Arabic or the Syro-Ethiopic, in opposition to the Indo-Persian or Indo-Germanic, another great division of the white race.² Thus the Bible has been right from the first in classing races which spoke so-called Semitic languages, as sprung from Ham, though it is only now that modern science, at this late day has made the discovery which Scripture had pointed out with unerring exactness for thousands of years.³

Still ascending the great river, we next meet the name ARPHAXAD, or Arpachshad, a district to the north of Assyria proper, and north-east of the Upper Tigris; apparently the table land between the lakes Urumiah and Van, and thus only about a hundred miles south of Kars, in Asia Minor. Arphaxad is stated to have been the

¹ Whether the Turanian race was nearer to the Hamitic or to the Semitic family, is one of the most difficult problems of ethnology. The most probable opinion seems to be that the Turanian was the stage of speech which the different races carried with them when they first left their primeval seats; that it was developed by the race of Ham, who, as the earliest cultivators of science and art, would be the first to require new forms of language, into the stage seen in the Hamitic dialects of Africa and Southern Asia: and that these were again modified, by contact with Semitic races, into the forms of speech called Semitic. The Aryan languages seem to have passed out of the Turanian stage by a still more direct process. Smith's *Ancient History*, p. 54.

Of the science of language Max Müller says:—

“It leads us up to that highest summit from whence we see into the very dawn of man's life on earth, and when the words which we have heard so often in our childhood, ‘And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech,’ assume a meaning more natural, more intelligible, more convincing, than they ever had before.” *Science of Language*, vol. i. p. 409.

² Guigniant, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, vol. ii. p. 822.

³ The description of the Ethiopians in *Herod.*, iii. 21, is very noteworthy.

ancestor of Abraham, at the distance of seven generations; but it cannot be certain whether it is only intended by this that the region called Arphaxad was the cradle of the Hebrew branch of the Semitic race, or whether the name is that of an individual, for the tribe living in a district, has, throughout the list, the name of the district assigned it.

In LUD, the fourth "son" of Shem, it has been the prevailing belief, since the time of Josephus, that the land and people of Lydia, in Asia Minor, are intended. The order of the names in the list strengthens this opinion, for, beginning with Elam, in the south-east, the countries named go regularly north-west, till, in Lydia, they turn west; to end in the south with Aram or Syria, which lies near it. Enough is not as yet known of the language of the Lydians to judge confidently whether it was Semitic; but Lagarde,¹ a keen and accomplished scholar, by no means biassed on the side of the Bible, recognises a Semitic element in it, and concludes that it must have belonged to this stock. There is besides, in Herodotus,² a tradition that the first king of the Lydians was a son of Ninus and grandson of Belus, which seems to point to a Semitic origin for the community. Even as regards their language, moreover, it is not to be forgotten, that were the proofs of its being Semitic deemed insufficient, the fact would be as little decisive of a difference of race as it is in other cases.³ Lydia, it may be added, is not to be limited in early ages to the bounds of the later state, but was rather a wide undefined region.

ARAM was originally the name of a small division of the so-called Aramaic, or Syrian branch of the Semitic race. In the Assyrian inscriptions it is applied to the North

¹ *Gesammelten Abhandlungen*, Leipzig, 1866.

² i. 7.

³ Prof. Dr. Kautzsch, in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*, art. Lud.

and East Arameans, and included the people of Hamath in Upper Lebanon, and Harran on the Upper Euphrates, or in other words, the region from Northern Mesopotamia to Upper Syria.¹ But it early came to be used of all the nations speaking Aramaic and reckoned Semitic; so far as they were not included in Elam, Assur, Lud, and Arphaxad. All such races, whether living in Armenia on the north; in the districts of Taurus and Lebanon on the west; in North Palestine; in the Arabian desert in the south; and, in the east, on the Euphrates and Tigris, were thus Aramaic or Syrian,² though these widely separate regions were not all reckoned as Aram or Syria, which is an abbreviation of Assyria, at least as old as Herodotus.³ Its wide bounds are seen in the fact that in Arabic it is simply called "the North Land," in contrast to Yemen or the "South Land"—that is, in contrast to Arabia proper. "Aram," means apparently "Highland," and thus points to its having been originally used of the mountainous and upland districts of the higher Tigris and the Taurus range, which stretches, thence, westwards, into Asia Minor.

Four names are given as the children of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether and Mash, the first of which, Uz, is famous as the home of the patriarch Job. As such it has been a subject of great interest and much discussion, but the latest and most thorough re-examination of the whole matter has, apparently on good grounds, identified it with Bashan, on the east of the Jordan; including the districts of Batanaea, Trachonitis, the Hauran and Iturea, but not Gilead. In this region tradition has placed "the Land of Job"⁴ and the people still speak of it by that

¹ Schrader's *Keilinschriften*, p. 33.

² Schrader, art. Aram. *Riehm*.

³ *Herod.*, vii. 63.

⁴ *Das Buch Hiob*. Delitsch (1864), p. 507.

name, assigning his home to the most fruitful part in the Hauran plains. Here there is still a hamlet known as "Job's place," and springs in which, according to the Koran, Job bathed after his recovery. Fifteen hundred years ago we find this locality noted by Eusebius¹ as the country of the patriarch, and Chrysostom² speaks of the people making pilgrimages to it from all parts of the world, to see the ash heaps on which Job sat, and to kiss the ground made sacred by his memory. Nor is there any difficulty in the fact that his home is at times spoken of as in Arabia, for that name was used of the Hauran; its southern town, Bozra, being reckoned in Arabia by Josephus,³ who even assigns the Hauran as the country of Uz, the reputed founder of Damascus and Trachonitis.⁴

HUL seems to be most correctly identified as the district round the Lake Merom still known as el Huleh; in part a swampy region, with dense beds of reeds, long after the delight of Herod the Great, as a covert for the wild boars and other large game he loved so well to hunt. But the land rises on the west to over a thousand feet, and to a still greater elevation on the east, though the whole district is not more than five or six miles broad, and about twenty from north to south. GETHER, the third name, seems to have been the district of Iturea, lying between Uz or the Hauran on the east, and Hul or el Huleh, on the west;⁵ perhaps the district from which, as the kingdom of Geshur, David got his wife Maacah, the

¹ Died A.D. 340.

² Died A.D. 407.

³ *Ant.*, iv. 7, 4.

⁴ *Ant.*, i. 6, 4. Hitzig, *Das Buch Hiob*, Leipzig (1874), also places Uz in the Hauran. So does Merx.

⁵ Merx, in *Bib. Lex.*, vol. i. p. 542.

mother of Absalom.¹ MASH, which is given as Mesech in the Septuagint, was possibly the district of Mount Masios in Northern Mesopotamia,² immediately south of Armenia, but there seems a greater probability that a trace of it may still be found not far from el Huleh in a site known as *Mais el Jebel*.³

The list now becomes more directly genealogical, introducing the descendants of Arphaxad, in whom we recognise known historic names. Of these, the first, SALAH, or Shelach, means "sending out," and his first-born is EBER, the "crossing over," or "the farther side."⁴ The name is however used by Balaam⁵ as that of a country; no doubt part of Mesopotamia: an instance of the difficulty there is in knowing when these names refer to historic personages, and when to the country from which individuals or races sprang. We have, in all likelihood, in Shelach and Eber a hint of the original migration of the forefathers of the Hebrews from their mountain homes in the far north-east to the fertile plains of Mesopotamia, on the south-west; it may be yielding to the pressure of Central Asian tribes, who from the earliest ages were restlessly advancing towards the south and west. After Eber, we are told, the smaller section of the Chaldean Semitic race of which he was the head divided, under his two "sons," Peleg "division," or "separation," and Joktan "made small," and henceforth lived as distinct peoples. Those connected with Joktan wandered southwards towards Arabia, where they apparently joined a number of Cushite tribes who had already made it their

¹ Thomson's *Land and the Book*, p. 251.

² Knobel, *Völkertafel* p. 237.

³ Thomson's *Land and the Book*, p. 25.

⁴ Kneucker translates Eber as "coast," "shore," "shoreland."

⁵ Num. xxiv. 24.

home, forming thus a mixed people, proud of their connection with Cush; who linked them more closely with the great patriarch Noah, than they had been under Heber, their own immediate head. The same course repeated itself at a later time, in a similar mingling of tribes springing from Abraham, with like Cushite peoples; and in this way the occurrence of the same names in the descendants of Cush and of Abraham may be easily explained. The locality of Peleg's settlement, for the time, appears to have been where the river Chaboras falls into the Euphrates from the east, about half way down its course. The name Phaliga, formerly a town at that spot, seems to mark it as the ancient home of the Peleg tribe. The thirteen tribes descended from Joktan can only be traced, as a whole, to Arabia; the interior of that country being too little known to warrant anything more.

The country ranged over by these Arab tribes is said to have extended from "Mescha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east;" the former, apparently the district and town of Mesene, known to antiquity in the sandy parts near Bassorah, at the mouths of the Euphrates and Tigris, on the Persian Gulf. "Sephar, a mount of the east," on the other hand, seems to be well identified in Zafar, the anciently famous harbour and royal city of the Himyarite kingdom, still known as Isfôr, on the south-east coast of Arabia. Over that vast stretch of country, largely desert, their wandering tribes could find abundant pasture.

Thus closes the venerable document, which Sir Henry Rawlinson justly calls, "the most authentic record we possess for the affiliation of nations."¹ Its historical exactness, recalls the article of Jewish faith which maintains that its verses are as fully and directly inspired

¹ *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, vol. xv. p. 230.

as the words "I am the Lord your God."¹ But it is also of the utmost value for the proof it gives of the limited conception of the world by the ancient Hebrews. The north edge of Africa, not very far below Egypt, Arabia, Ilam, a fringe of unknown territory north of Armenia, and the Black Sea; Thessaly, Greece, part of Italy, and the islands of the Mediterranean, embrace in their circle the whole Hebrew earth, with the exception of Tarshish in Spain, known in the days of Moses, or even earlier.²

¹ Ryland's *Synagoga Judaica*, p. 20.

² In illustration of this, see the map, p. 242.





CHAPTER XVII.

THE FIRST GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL HISTORY.

THE earliest movements of mankind in Western Asia, as disclosed by the study of the most ancient records, preserved at Babylon and Nineveh ; by the brief notices of ancient writers ; and by modern philological investigations, show that in prehistoric times a vast migration of tribes related to the Mongol race, and known by the general name of Turanian, passed from Central Asia, in different directions. Known under the name of Scythians, among the ancients, and reckoned by them "the most ancient of men," this great division of mankind includes in our day the Finns and Lapps of Northern Europe, the Basques of Spain, the Turks and Turcomans of Central Asia, the Hungarians, the tribes of Northern Siberia, and the teeming myriads of China and Japan. Once stretching from the Amoor to the farthest west, they have now rather changed than diminished their wide range. The very different types of mankind seen in this great race as we know it to-day, seem to have sprung from a mixture of the white and the yellow families of men ; for some nations have all the characteristics of the whites, others are identical with the yellow, and between these there are varieties which connect the most perfect European type with that of the Chinese.

A tradition still current among the wandering Turcomans of Asia, places its cradle a little north of the table land of Pamir, in one of the valleys of the Altai mountains. Starting thence, one part of it sought the west, and spread to the extremities of Europe; where the Basques of Spain and some of the Pyrenean populations are, perhaps, its last representatives. Another portion, wandering south, occupied the plains of Bactria, crossed the Hindoo Koosh, and made its home, at first, on the border of the table-land of Iran or Persia, where it established itself in the region afterwards known as Media. Several tribes, however, wandered on to Atropatene, to Armenia, and even, as we have seen, to Asia Minor. Others again pushed to the south and fixed their homes in the uplands and plains of Susiana, and on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates.

These earliest known inhabitants of Mesopotamia were called among themselves "the Accadians" or "Mountaineers;" a name brought with them from the mountain land in the far north-east from which their race had migrated. Before reaching the Euphrates they had already become an organized nation, possessing a peculiar form of writing, the chief necessary industries of civilization, and a systematized legislation and religion. Their alphabet, like that of the Egyptians, was at first purely hieroglyphic; each sign being a picture of the object desired to be represented, or of something nearest the idea to be expressed. Thus "God" was indicated by a star with eight rays; a king by the figure of a bee; but these signs, ere long, passed into rude imitations of their original form, and thus led to the system known as the cuneiform, or arrowhead, or wedge-shaped characters.

Besides writing, however, these Accadians knew the

use of both the common and precious metals, for they had learned the art of mining in the rich mountain regions of Tibet, their first home. Their oldest tombs contain objects in gold, and in bronze and iron; knives hatchets, scythes, bracelets, and chased earrings.¹ But, side by side with these, are found flint arms and implements, heads of arrows, axes, and hammers. Iron was the scarcest metal amongst them, and, as such, the most precious.² The only fragment we possess of their laws treats of the relations and rights of the family, which closely resemble those prevalent among the ancient Finns and Lapps, in the special importance ascribed to the wife, who could hold property even after marriage. To deny his mother excluded a son from earth and water; to deny a father only entailed a fine.³ Nothing can be more strangely new, though little could be more convincing, than the proofs by which modern scholars identify this long vanished branch of a great race with the still surviving section of Turanians known as the Ougro-Finnish. But, unlikely though it seems, there is every reason to believe that a close relationship of blood existed between the Magyar and the modern Finlander on the one hand, and the earliest settlers of Chaldea on the other.⁴

This Turanian race had been established, we know not how long, on the Euphrates and Tigris, when a people of another stock appeared, disputing their territory and ultimately overpowering them. These were a branch of the Cushites or Ethiopian stock, a people very distinct from the negro. Short in stature, thin and well made;

¹ Rawlinson's *Five Great Monarchies*, vol. i. pp. 98, 99.

² Lenormant, *Les Premières Civilizations*, vol. i. pp. 118, 119.

³ Lenormant, *La Magie chez les Chaldéens*, p. 311.

⁴ Lenormant, *Ibid.* passim.

their abundant hair, often curly, was never crisped like that of the negro ; dark-coloured but varying from clear brown to black, their features were regular, often delicate ; the brow straight, narrow, and often high ; the nose long, thin, and fine, but the lips thick and fleshy. Spreading every way from Western Asia, the mother of nations, some tribes settled at the foot of the range still known as the Hindoo Koosh. Others wandered on to Asia Minor, where the Carians were said to be their descendants. The hardiest, crossing Persia and Arabia, reached the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, and passing over into Africa, settled on the Blue Nile, where their posterity, the "vile Cushites," were for many ages the mortal enemies of the Egyptians. From the mouths of the Indus they had spread, southwards, along the western shores of India, to the Malabar Coast, and westwards, along the coast of what is now Beloochistan, and the edges of the Persian Gulf. In Arabia they fringed the land on the east and south, and passing into Africa reached the regions of Sofala—that is, as far south as the colony of Natal ; and penetrated, by the straits of Bab el Mandeb, along the western side of the Red Sea, to the Elanitic Gulf, which bounds the peninsula of Sinai on the east. Their energy, indeed, broke beyond these bounds, for we can follow them along the edge of the Mediterranean, from the Delta of Egypt to the shores of Palestine.¹ On these shores, indeed, they found their most famous home as the Phenicians of Sidon and Tyre ; the "Canaanites" of the Bible. Thus, from the Indus to the Mediterranean, and from the coasts of Palestine to the far south of Africa, the race of Cush everywhere showed itself ; nor can it be wrong to regard it as perhaps the most important of all the great primitive races of mankind. Its fame, indeed, spread

¹ D'Eckstein, in *L'Athenæum Français*, April 22, 1854.

through all antiquity, for the Greek poets commemorate the Cushite Memnon, the founder of Susa and the ally of Priam, while Homer celebrates the Ethiopians as the wisest and remotest of men, of whom part dwelt at the rising and part at the setting sun.¹

The Cushites spoke a language very closely allied to the Hebrew, Arabic, and other Semitic idioms; as if they and the Semitic races had originally lived together and been of the same stock, as we indeed know from Genesis they originally were, though civilized at different periods. They were, in fact, a branch of the great Semitic family which had earliest left the common centre, and having first among the tribes known by that name, abandoned the nomadic life and risen to civilization, drew down on themselves for doing so, at once the envy and hatred of the other branches of the race which kept to their pastoral life.²

Three of the chief Cushite³ peoples chose the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf; one the Kossians or Kissiens of the classics, settling in the mountainous region on the east of the Tigris, afterwards known as Susiana; a second fixing their dwelling in the lower regions of the Euphrates and Tigris; a third colonising the southern shores and the off-lying islands of the Persian Gulf, whence in later times they emigrated to the Mediterranean, to become the Phenicians of the Palestine coasts.⁴

¹ *Odys.*, i. 23, 24.

² Creutzer and Guigniant, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, vol. ii. pt. 3, pp. 8, 22.

³ The name is often spelt Koushite, but the Bible spelling is retained as better known.

⁴ Oppert fixes on the island of Bahrein in the Persian Gulf as the original seat of the Phenicians. There was a place called

It was from a division of this great race, coming "eastward" from Arabia, settled at the mouths of the Euphrates and Tigris, that the first great wars of conquest rose of which we have mention. In a period before the historical monuments that still survive, a Cushite chieftain of this region, Nimrod by name, the Alexander of his day, conquered, apparently after a fierce struggle, the Accadians, of the Turanian race, already settled in Mesopotamia. Jewish legend has traced his name to a verb meaning "to rebel," but this etymology is more than doubtful. It seems, indeed, more likely that it means "the glorious" or "splendid," and that it was given to the founder of the Cushite dynasty as that of the god Amarud or Marduk—the planet Jupiter—an old Accadian deity, with whom it was thus sought to make him one.¹ It may be that we have a reminiscence of it in the ancient town of Nipour or Nipra, in Babylonia; a place identified in the Talmud with the Biblical town of Calneh.² Like many conquerors, Nimrod bore the fame of a mighty hunter; no mean advantage in an age when forest and waste were still so largely unsubdued. That his name filled the ear of the world in his own distant day is sufficiently proved by the fact that, with those of Solomon and Alexander the Great, it has still a mysterious grandeur among all the peoples of Western Asia.

"The beginning of his kingdom," we read, was Babel—and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar,³

Tyrus there. *Proceedings of Society of Bib. Archæol.* (Nov. 4, 1879). Maspero is of the same opinion. *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 145.

¹ *Joma*, x. a. Schrader repudiates this identification. Lenormant quotes it without remark. Marduk = Merodach.

² Grivel, in *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. iii. pp. 136 ff.

³ Gen. x. 10.

places, the population of which is indicated as Accadian from the mention of Accad as one of them. Of these early cities, Babel—the gate, or temple of the god El, afterwards known as the mighty Babylon—needs no identification. In Erech, or Moon-town,¹ we have, doubtless, the Arka of the monuments, and the Warka of to-day; a place, apparently, even in the earliest ages, the great Necropolis of the Babylonians,² as it still is of the natives of that region, die where they may.³ It lies south of Babylon, on the west side of the Euphrates. Accad is not identified as yet, nor is Calneh, but they both, doubtless, lay in the lower part of Mesopotamia.

This prehistoric conquest still finds a silent corroboration in the earliest monuments that have been preserved. On these, the two distinct elements of the population of Chaldea and Babylon created by it, are recorded—the Sumirs, or “dwellers on the river,” and the Accads, or “mountaineers,”—the former, specially inhabitants of the “land of Sumir” or Shinar;⁴ the latter of the “land of the Accadians;” terms constantly used together on the monuments for Babylon as a political whole. The fusion of these two races, the Sumirs, a Cushite branch of the Semitic stock, and the Accads, produced, in the course of time, the Chaldean nation known in history.

This mingled population of two different stocks, which history at its dawn introduces to us as occupying the soil of Babylonia, found neither quarries, nor mines, from which to extract stone for their building, or metals for their use. Perhaps, like the Chaldean Arabs of to-day,

¹ Oppert.

² Schrader's *Keilinschriften*, p. 18.

³ Loftus (*Chaldea*) gives a terrible account of the transport of caravans of corpses from vast distances, at the present day, for burial at Warka.

⁴ Shinar is only a varying form of Sumir, in Accadian.

their first habitations were no more than huts of wattled osiers covered with mats. But, if so, they soon employed more solid material in the wood of the palm, and burnt, or sun-dried bricks, for the oldest ruins as yet known are those of gigantic buildings of these materials. Thus, among the various mounds on the site of Babylon, marking the scene of so much ancient splendour, one, 130 feet high and nearly 600 long, has been found, covering the remains of an ancient temple to the god Merodach. This vast structure seems to have been a square pyramid of over 600 feet high, and as long on each side, at its base—or 200 feet higher than the cross on St. Paul's, and 100 feet longer each way than the length of St. Paul's, east and west.¹ Its extreme age is proved by its secret name, Saggatu, "the high temple"—an old Accadian word.² An inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, one of the greatest builders among the Babylonian kings, shows us that he restored it 600 years before Christ, but it had already been repaired, as a venerable relic of antiquity, by Tiglath Pileser, a century earlier. It is at Borsippa, however, more than twelve miles, in a straight line, from the huge mound known as Babel, that we find the most interesting trace of the earliest ages of Babylon, in the vast heap which has immemorially borne the name of Birs³ Nimrud, or the Tower of Nimrod. This great ruin, a bare hill of yellow sand and bricks, near the left bank of the Euphrates, reaches a height of 198 feet: a vast mass of brickwork jutting from the mound, to a further height of 37 feet, making 235 in all. It is ascended by a ravine on the south-east side, which rises gently, over

¹ *English Cyclo.*, art. London.

² Schrader, art. Babel, in *Riehm*.

³ Borsippa is the old name—*Barsip*, of a "quarter" of Babylon *Riehm*. Oppert, at this place, found bricks marked "Barsip."

what appears a hill of shapeless earth, but proves at once on examination to be the remains of brickwork; the plain of Babylon, as we may remind the reader, furnishing no other material for the grandest constructions than the clay around, baked in the sun or burnt. From the top of the hill the eye ranges over the vast landscape, but the huge fragment of Nebuchadnezzar's tower, built of pale red bricks, rises, in massive strength, nearly 40 feet higher. A bed of lichens covers almost its whole surface—a proof, under such a sky, of the vast age of the ruin. Numerous birds find shelter in its cracks and rifts, and, all round, the ground is strewn with fragments and masses of bricks, fallen from above. Of these some are yellow, others blue or dark green; many of the larger blocks showing proofs of having been exposed to intense heat.¹ So fierce, indeed, has been the fire, that the layers of bricks still visible in their place are twisted and waved from their original horizontal position. Still, few ruins in the world can compare with Birs Nimrud for simple grandeur.²

The original form of the whole structure, known to the Greeks as the Temple of Belus, was that of seven square towers, rising one above the other, like gigantic steps; each smaller than the one below it, and consecrated respectively to the seven planetary gods, to whom they formed distinct temples. Beginning with that of Saturn at the bottom, that of Venus came next; then, one over the other, those of Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, the Moon, and the Sun; the colours assigned to the particular deity—

¹ The words in Genesis for “let us make bricks,” are almost identical with those meaning the same in Assyrian inscriptions. It is striking to notice that bitumen has been used for mortar at Birs Nimrud, in strict accordance with Genesis xi. 3.

² Oppert, *Expédition en Mésopotamie*, vol. i. p. 204.

black, white, orange, blue, scarlet, silver, and gold—distinguishing the respective storeys. The construction in platforms of diminishing size was not uncommon, for a tower of the same character, at Khorsabad, still shows the remains of four. Herodotus describes this one as standing in an enclosure 1,200 feet square, and as, itself, 606 feet square at the base; Strabo adding its height as also a stadium; which would make it half as high again as the cross on St. Paul's. The ascent was made, we are told, by a winding path round the outside, with a landing place, and seats for resting, about the middle of the way up; while in the uppermost tower there was a spacious temple with an apartment splendidly furnished, in which stood a couch, and by its side a table of gold,¹ for the accommodation of Nebo, the god to whom the whole was dedicated; but there was no image of the god in it, though a priestess slept in the chamber at night. In the temple on the lowest step, there was a golden image of Belus on a throne of gold, before a golden table, set on a golden floor; and another golden statue of the god, 24 feet high, stood in the temple enclosure, till Xerxes took both away.

If the measurements thus given by these ancient authorities be correct, the building must have been indeed immense, for the Great Pyramid itself is only 750 feet square at its base, and rises to a height of only 480 feet; whereas this tower, from a square base of over 600 feet, rose 120 feet higher. Its vastness may indeed be gathered from the fact that Alexander the Great employed 10,000 men for two months in removing the rubbish which at his day had fallen from it. Nor is there any good ground for questioning the correctness of

¹ Strabo speaks of the "Tomb of Belus," but it is clear that he means the tower.

the old Greek historian, for the tower was still standing in something like completeness when he was in Babylon, though Xerxes had rifled it of its treasures and dug into it in search of them.

Doubt has, however, been thrown on these ancient accounts, by the apparent contradiction between this mountain-like height and the more humble proportions of a great tower, repaired by Nebuchadnezzar, which seems to have been the same temple of Belus. Two copies of an inscription, record his having repaired and completed "The Temple of the Seven Lights or Planets," of the earth; a name which exactly suits the description of the tower of Borsippa, as indeed it is also called. It had hitherto remained unfinished, from immemorial antiquity; a fact strikingly corroborative of the narrative of Genesis. Nebuchadnezzar, however, tells us in royal style, "An earlier king had built the Temple of the Seven Lights of the Earth, the Tower of Borsippa, to a height reckoned at eighty-four feet,—but he had not completed it, and many days had passed since then. There was no proper management of the outflow-canals for the water of the place. Rain and storm had washed out the burned bricks, and the sun-dried bricks of its roofing were cracked. The burned bricks of the Temple itself had, also, been washed away into heaps of ruin. The great god Merodach put it into my mind to repair it; but I did not meddle with the site and I left the foundation walls untouched. In a prosperous month and on a lucky day I repaired the burned bricks of the body of the building, and the sun-dried bricks of the roofing, joining them fast by mason-work; and I renewed the woodwork and set my name on the top of its rebuilt walls. I raised my hand to finish it and to set up its top. I rebuilt it as it had been of old, and raised

its top as it had been in those days.”¹ Schrader understands that Nebuchadnezzar added 84 feet to the already existing tower, thus making it 168 feet high in all, but this hardly seems to be implied in the inscription. Ebers, on the other hand, thinks that the present Birs Nimrud, if it really at all represent the Tower of Babel, is only the ruins of the first storey.² The multitudes of similar structures in Babylonia, and the distance of this

¹ Schrader’s translation. *Keilinschriften*, p. 38.

The translation by Fox Talbot varies somewhat from this. It is as follows :—

The Temple of the Seven Planets, which is the Tower of Borsippa,
Which former kings had built and raised to the height of forty-
two cubits,

But whose upper part, not having been finished by them,
Had rotted away from extreme old age.

The watersprings beneath it had not been kept in order :

The rain and the tempest had ruined its buildings :

The slabs that covered it had fallen off, and the bricks of its wall
lay scattered in heaps.

The great Lord Merodach incited my heart to repair it.

Its site had not been disturbed : its platform had not been des-
troyed.

In a fortunate month and on a lucky day

I collected the finest of the bricks of its wall and of the slabs that
covered it, and rebuilt the ruins firmly.

I placed inscriptions written in my name in the finest apartments,
And thus made an end of rebuilding the ruin and completing its
upper part.

Records of the Past, vol. vii. p. 76.

I omit much that does not bear on the repair of the Tower.

M. Oppert has collected all the notices of Birs Nimrud, and of the Tomb of Belus, from the classics, and also all the references to them in the cuneiform inscriptions, and seems to not a few to have proved beyond question that Birs Nimrud is indeed the Tower of Babel. See *La Bible et les Découvertes Modernes*, par L’Abbé Vigouroux, vol. i. p. 297.

² *Eine Ägyptische Königstochter*, vol. ii. p. 250 note.

one from Babylon itself, seems to this great scholar to make the identification doubtful. However this may be, it is curious to find how estimates vary; for while Layard gives that of the mound at 198 feet, with an addition of 38 for the mass of brick-work at the top, Rawlinson speaks of it as only 153½ feet high, in all; which Schrader compares with the 168 feet he thinks he has obtained. The discrepancy of even Layard's figures, however, with those of Herodotus and Strabo, is extraordinary, nor is it easy to see how it can be explained, unless, indeed, the labours of Alexander's soldiers had lowered the vast mound by nearly two-thirds, or Ebers be right in his conjecture, that all that remains is only the wreck of the lowest storey.

Whether these gigantic erections belong to the period to which the eleventh chapter of Genesis refers, is of course a question, but they are at least as old as the earliest records of profane history.¹ It seems certain, moreover, even apart from the Bible, that a great empire, founded by one known ever since as Nimrod, absorbed the whole of West Asia, shattering the Turanian power, which till then had spread itself far and wide, and leaving its warlike memorials in the shape of towers, castles, and fortified cities. Assyria, in the mountainous north, may have been only an extension of this wide dominion, but, in any case, Nimrod was the Cæsar or Napoleon of the first races of men. It does not follow from this, however, that the conception of him in tradition as an arch-rebel against God is correct, nor that he was, as Josephus supposed, the prime mover in the building of the Tower of Babel.² The phrase used of him in

¹ Schrader, *Keilinschriften*, p. 35, thinks that Birs Nimrud is certainly "The Tower of Babel."

² *Ant.*, i. 4, 2.

Scripture seems one of commendation rather than blame; for to speak of him as "a mighty one," that is, a warrior hero, "on the earth," and as "a mighty hunter before Jehovah," shows that the bad name he has since held was not attached to him in the days of Moses; for "before Jehovah" is a phrase equivalent to "well pleasing" to Him, as is seen in many texts.¹

The building and arrest of "The Tower of Babel," and the "confusion of tongues," are evidently connected with this glimpse of the first great military empire. Whether, as some have suggested, the phrase "the whole earth," in the 1st verse of the 11th chapter of Genesis, should be translated "the whole land," is a point on which the most orthodox may safely differ, for the word is sometimes used in the one sense and sometimes in the other, in Scripture; as we have already seen in connection with the Flood. The narrative carries us back to a period, we know not how remote, when the

¹ Gen. xvii. 1; xxiv. 40; xlviii. 15. Ps. xix. 14; cxvi. 9. See Gesenius' *Lexicon*, under the word Jehovah. Grivet quotes an Accadian liturgy, in which Merodach is called, "I am he who walks before Ea—I am the warrior, the eldest son of Ea—the messenger." Ea undoubtedly resembles Jah in sound, and the whole phrase is strikingly like the expressions respecting Nimrod in Genesis. The words translated in our version, "a mighty hunter," are rendered in the Septuagint, "a giant hunter;" in the Vulgate, "a valiant hunter"; in the Arabic, "a terrible giant;" in the Syriac, "a giant warrior;" and in the Chaldee, "a valiant man." "To walk before Jehovah" is the ideal of a godly life in Scripture. Can it be, asks M. Grivel, that the word "walk" has been lost from the Hebrew text in its reference to Nimrod? There is at least very little doubt that the great king was deified after his death, if not before it, for, apart from the meaning of Merodach, the constellation Orion bears in Arabic the name El Jabbar, "the giant." Orion is a mighty hunter even in Homer. *Odyss.*, xi. 572, 575.

population of Mesopotamia still spoke a common dialect: it may be as a result of the political relations established by Nimrod's empire. In the childlike language natural to a document which has reached us from the infancy of the world, we read that some of the races—now united under one sceptre—accustomed to build gigantic towers, in imitation of the distant mountains from which their forefathers had come, determined to found a city which should boast of a tower, reaching, in their simple conceptions, to heaven; hoping thus at once to attract the favour of the gods, and bind all the populations round to one grand religious centre.¹ A great catastrophe, however, brought about we know not how, not only stopped the undertaking, but led to the population being scattered “abroad” from the plain of Shinar, “upon the face of all the earth;” “confounding their language,” so that they could not understand one another's speech. Can it be that in this narration we have the statement of the immediate cause of that dispersion of mankind from their original common home, which led to the divergence of human speech into the three great branches—the Turanian, the Semitic and the Aryan, to which it can even now be finally traced back? “Nothing,” says Max Müller, “necessitates the admission of different beginnings for the formal elements of the Turanian, Semitic and Aryan branches of speech.”²

¹ So the Israelites spoke of cities “Walled up to heaven,” Deut. i. 28; and so Homer speaks of a pine tree reaching to heaven. *Odyss.*, v. 239.

² *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 1st series, p. 342. F. Delitzsch,—*Studien über indogermanische Wurzelverwandschaft*,—has collected a surprising number of roots common to Sanscrit and Hebrew. An example may suffice. The word *gahal* means means to call, in Hebrew, Assyrian and Aramaic. In the same

While these three great families of language are characterized by wide distinctions in form and structure, there is at the same time such an amount of similarity in the leading roots of all as would indicate something like a common origin. "It is possible even now," says Professor Müller, "to point out radicals which, under various changes and disguises, have been current in the three branches ever since their first separation."

"What could be more fitting," asks Bunsen, "than to recognise in this narrative, the account of the division of Central Asiatic mankind into those three great world-historical races, which form in themselves a unity, and to which we are now in a position to trace back all the peoples of Asia and Europe known to us by their speech? Research respecting these three races, the Turanians, the Semites, and the Aryans, leads us to a great common centre—the district bounded by the mountains of Central Asia—the Caucasus, Ararat and the Altai."¹

Bunsen sees in the narration a hint of the providential breaking up of Nimrod's empire, and the subsequent dispersion of the population; resulting in such a formation of dialects and languages no longer understood except by the tribes in which they had sprung up, as happened at the dissolution of the Roman empire. Five or six idioms—the Italian, French, Spanish, Wallachian and Italian were then developed from the Latin, which had previously been common to all the countries in which these new forms of speech arose. This is ingenious, and does not exclude the direct action of God in the result; for His course is no less providential, whether

way *kaleo*, in Greek, means *to call*, and *concilium*, in Latin, means a body of people called together (p. 90).

¹ Bunsen's *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 76.

sudden, or working by the slow operation of natural laws. The growth of a tree in a hundred years is as truly Divine as if it grew in a night. In both cases God alone brought it about. "There is no reason," says an acute critic of bygone days, "why we should think the confusion of tongues the work of a moment; for details could not be given in so short a notice. Who does not see that the early days of the human race are here given with the utmost brevity, and that the annals of many years are crowded between a few commas? It is more likely that discord was first sent among men, and that from this cause, leaving the work unfinished, they scattered into neighbouring regions, and gradually wandered farther and farther off; and that their languages gradually changed as they were thus isolated over the face of the earth. The facts may have been brought succinctly together by Moses in his compendious narrative, but those interpreters surely err who think that they were carried out to completion by God almost as quickly as the verses themselves are read."¹

An event so striking could not fail to perpetuate itself, more or less, in the traditions of the region, and, hence, it was only what might have been expected, when the early legends of Creation and the Flood were recovered from Assyria, that some reference should also be found to the Confusion of Tongues. Unfortunately, the tablets relating to it, which were brought to England by the lamented George Smith, are sadly mutilated, but even in their fragmentary state they are of great interest. So far as they are intelligible they run as follows:

"The thoughts of men's hearts were evil, so that the father of the gods turned from them. Babylon had corruptly turned to sin, and set about building a great

¹ Clerici, *Comment. in Genesin*, p. 105.

Tower. Small and great mingled at the task, raising the mound. This they did all the day, raising up their stronghold; but in the night the god Anu entirely made an end of it. In his anger, also, he poured out before the gods his secret counsel to scatter them abroad, and set his face against them, and for this end gave a command to make strange their speech, and thus hinder their progress. Numantir—the god of confusion—having gone down, they violently resisted him, but he cast them to the earth when they would not stop their work. They revolted against the gods, but sorely they wept for Babylon, and grieved very much (when their work was stopped and they were scattered abroad)."

Echoes of the same tradition have reached us from other sources also. A quotation by Eusebius, from Abydenus, a Greek historian, who lived about two hundred years before Christ, informs us that "The Assyrians relate that the first men, sprung from the earth, defiant in their strength and giant size, and despising the gods, in the belief that they themselves were their superiors, undertook to build a high tower on the spot where Babylon now stands. It had already almost reached heaven, when the winds, aiding the gods, threw down the huge mass on the heads of the builders; and from these ruins Babylon was built. And whereas men, till then, had all spoken the same language, henceforth, by the operation of the gods, they spoke in different languages."

Nor is even Western Antiquity without a tradition of the same kind. Homer sings how "the two giants began to set Ossa on Olympus and Pelion on Ossa, that they might climb to heaven; and would have succeeded,

¹ Smith's *Chaldean Genesis*, pp. 160–162. Chad Boscawen, *Trans. Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. pp. 304–311.

² Euseb., *Præparatio Evangelica*, ix. c. 14.

had they reached the age of manhood. But the Son of Jove destroyed them both before the hair had grown on their cheeks or the down on their chins.”¹

Even in the New World, indeed, there seems to have been a vivid remembrance in the ancient Indian races of such a stupendous event as Genesis records. A Mexican manuscript, in the Vatican library, relates that, “Before the great inundation which took place four thousand eight hundred years after the creation of the world, the country of Anahuac was inhabited by giants. All who did not perish in the flood were turned into fishes, except seven, who fled into caverns. When the waters subsided, one of the giants, surnamed the Architect, went to Cholula, where, as a memorial to the mountain Ilaloe, which had served as a refuge to himself and his six brethren, he built an artificial hill in the form of a pyramid. He ordered bricks to be made at the foot of the hills, and placed a file of men who passed them from hand to hand. But the gods beheld with wrath this building, the top of which was to reach the clouds, and irritated at such an attempt, hurled fire on the pyramid. Numbers of the workmen perished, the work was discontinued, and the portion built was dedicated to the god of the air.”² We are further told, that at the time of the Spanish conquest, the ruins of this pyramid were still called “the mountain of unburnt brick.”³

The Jewish traditions of the building of the Tower are so curious that they deserve to be given.

¹ *Odys.*, xi. 315. The passage refers to two giant sons of Iphimedia and Neptune. Ovid repeats the fable, *Met.*, i. 151.

² Humboldt's *Researches*, vol. i. p. 96.

³ *The Migration from Shinar*, by Captain G. Palmer, R.N., contains a great many interesting facts as to the early settlement of America.

“After the Flood,” say the Rabbis, “men were afraid of another similar visitation, and forsook Palestine, the pleasant land, where Noah had last lived and sacrificed, and settled all together in one place, the plains of Shinar. There they no longer yielded themselves to the gentle guidance of godly Shem, the son of Noah, but cast away from themselves the kingdom of God, and did homage to Nimrod, the son of Cush, the son of Ham. For Nimrod was a man mighty in strength and in power. Born when his father was old, he was dearly loved by him; and received from him a gift of the robe with which God had first clothed Adam, when he had to leave Paradise. This robe had passed from Adam to Enoch, and from him to Methusaleh and to Noah, who took it with him in the ark. There it was stolen by Ham and given secretly by him to his son Cush. Nimrod, when clothed with it, was irresistible and invincible. The birds and beasts of the woods fell before him, and he conquered all his enemies easily. Thus he made himself king of Babylon, and extended his rule continually, till, by his cunning, he made men regard him as the lord of the whole earth, and persuaded them to look no longer to God, but to trust only to their own powers. Hence it was said that since the beginning of the world there was no one like Nimrod, terrible and mighty in destroying—by the chase and by his words—and sinful in the sight of God.”

“The longer Nimrod sat on his throne, the prouder he became. Having failed to kill the babe Abraham, as he desired, he slew 70,000 children, in the hope that the dreaded child might be among them. He was full of forebodings that his empire would fall, and that a man should rise who would revive that of Him to whom alone all the glory and the majesty of earth rightly belong. To

prevent this, and to turn men wholly from God, he assembled his entire people, and said to them, 'Come, let us build a great city, and establish ourselves in it, that we may not be scattered over the whole earth, and drowned in a flood, as happened to our forefathers.' At that time the idea had got abroad that God intended to disperse men, the better to get them under His power. 'Let us raise in the midst of the city a tower so high that no flood could rise above it, so strong that no fire, should one break out, could destroy it. Yes, let us do still more, let us build it up into the heavens, and stay it on them, on all its four sides, that it be steady, and that the waters in the skies may not fall on us. Let us therefore raise the top up to heaven, and cleave the sky with axes, that its waters may run out, and never again bring us into danger, and, so, we will avenge the destruction of our forefathers. Thus we will fight the Ruler of heaven, whose power lies only in these waters, and we will hurl arrows and darts at him, and set an idol image on the top of the tower, with a sword in its hand, to fight the King of heaven for us. Thus shall we gain a great name, and rule over the whole world.'

"Though all were not so foolish as to think of conquering heaven, and driving God from His throne, yet they complied with Nimrod's wishes. Many saw in the tower a real safeguard against men being scattered, or drowned by a flood. Others believed the scheme would advance the idolatry they loved. Therefore 600,000 men, among whom were 1,000 princes, set to work to build the tower, and raised it till its top was seventy miles high. When stone failed they had to burn bricks and carry them up; to help them in which there were steps on the east side for those going to the top, and on the west for those coming down. But the height and breadth of the tower

were such that when the builders ran short of anything it was a year before they could get it. If a workman fell from the top it gave no one concern, but if a brick gave way, or fell over, it caused loud outcries and lamentations. The arrows which they shot off into the sky came back covered with blood, so that in their folly they shouted, 'See, we have killed all that is in heaven.'

"Abraham was forty-eight years old when he saw this tower, the wickedness and folly of which he at once felt so deeply, that he drew near and earnestly implored the builders to abandon the undertaking. But they laughed at him, and despised him as they would the stone lying on the earth. Then he raised his voice and cried to God, 'O Lord, confound and divide their speech, for I see only violence and hate in this city.' And the Lord called the seventy angels who are round His throne, and commanded them to confound the speech of the builders, so that they should no longer understand each other. Hence they had to give up building any more, and were divided into seventy peoples speaking as many different languages."

"The upper third of the tower was destroyed by fire, the lowest part overthrown by an earthquake, the middle only remaining."

If this strange medley of fancies be worth nothing more, it at least shows the kind of Biblical exposition in which the Rabbis delighted.

The hieroglyphics of Egypt add their testimony to the recital of Moses. "Egyptian traditions," says M. Chabas, "agree in a remarkable manner with the statements of Genesis. They attribute the dispersion of nations to a revolt of the wicked. In the texts of Edfou, published by Naville, we read that the good principle under the solar form of Harmachis, triumphed over its adversaries in the region south of the nome Apollinopolites. Of those who

escaped the massacre, some emigrated to the south, and became the Cushites; others to the north and became the Amou; a third column, to the west, and became the Tamahou; and a fourth, to the east, and became the Shasou. In this enumeration the Cushites include the negroes. The Tamahou are the white race of the north of Africa, the isles of the Mediterranean, and Europe. Among the Amou figure all the great nations of Central and Eastern Asia—Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Chaldea, and Arabia, with the Bedouin of the desert and of ‘the mountains of Asia.’ Such was the Egyptian division of the great families of mankind.”

“It may be noted that the red, yellow, black and white races were all, more or less, under the direction and protection of the gods of Egypt, and that a place was made for the whole in the lower heaven. . . . The Egyptians considered all foreigners as branches of a great stem of which they themselves were the chief offshoot. They believed, moreover, that when mankind dispersed, at a time veiled in the twilight of mythology, they already knew the metals, and writing; could erect great buildings, and possessed a social and religious organisation.”¹

The legend thus referred to seems to have been originally an Egyptian version of the story of the Flood. In it, as in Genesis, men are punished for a revolt against God, who exterminates all but a few. A sacrifice is however offered, and He promises never again to destroy the race in this way. But, as has been noticed, since a flood was the symbol and source of all prosperity and happiness, as associated in the Egyptian mind with the overflow of the Nile, they altered the tradition to suit their own ideas; and while causing men to perish by the direct action of the gods, substituted an inundation as a

¹ *Études sur l'Antiquité Historique*, pp. 97–100.

sign of their being appeased, in place of the rainbow of Noah.¹ Ra, the god by whom men were destroyed, began his reign, it may be added, before the firmament was set over the earth, so that the legend refers to the earliest times of the world.²

How many storeys of the Tower of Babel had been raised, when the work was suddenly stopped by Divine interference, is not told us in Genesis, but it appears certain that the seven to which Nebuchadnezzar carried it had not been reached. Seven was a sacred number of the Babylonians as well as of the Hebrews, and we may be sure that it was originally intended to raise it to that height, else it would not have been thought necessary to rebuild it on such a scale. From the form of other towers of which the ruins still remain, we may form some estimate of the condition in which this first one was left when so abruptly stopped. In the great tower-temple of Ur there were only three storeys, and in the bas relief at Kouyundjik, that of another city is represented with five. For these and others, in the larger cities of Babylon and Assyria,³ the Tower of Babel, the oldest and most renowned, probably served as a model, and we may safely conclude that, if it had not been left unfinished, the sacred number seven would not have been departed from in others.⁴

¹ Naville. *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. iv. pp. 1 ff. *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 103. See p. 202.

² *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* (1874), p. 57.

³ Place, *Ninive et l'Assyrie*, vol. ii. p. 58.

⁴ The Abbé Vigouroux derives the word Ziggurat, the Assyrian name for these towers, from Zakar, "to remember," "to keep in mind," so that it would mean "a memorial," "that which will preserve the name or memory." If this be right, it is in striking accordance with the words of Genesis, "Let us make us a name" ("mark," or "memorial"), ch. xi. 4. *Vigouroux*, vol. i. p. 311.

The derivation of the word Babel, in Genesis, from Balal, "to confound," has, as already said, latterly found less favour among philological students than that from Bab-El, the gate or temple of the god El.¹ But the spelling of names changes greatly in the course of time, and this change affects their apparent origin. Thus Bethlehem originally meant "house of bread," but its present Arabic form, Beit-lahm, means "house of flesh." Oppert, in a similar way, has shown that however apt the new etymology of Babel may be, as the word is now spelt; it originally meant, as the Bible tells us, simply "confusion." Still more, the form "Babel" itself is proved by him to be a distinctly Assyrian derivation, from Balal, "to confound;" while, if it had come through the Hebrew, it would have been "Bilbal," or "Bilbur," the actual Rabbinical word for "confusion."² In the same way "Borsippa" means "The tower of languages," though changed in later times to Bar Sab, "The shattered altar." Moreover, the character by which it is represented in the Assyrian tablets, means, strange to say, in the opinion of Oppert, "The city of the dispersion of the tribes."³

The Jewish tradition on pp. 286 ff. is from Beer, *Leben Abraham's*, pp. 7-9.

¹ A. Maury. *Revue des Deux Mondes* (March 15, 1868), p. 477. See also, before, p. 28.

² Buxtorf, 309.

³ Oppert, *Journal Asiatique*, vol. x. p. 220; vol. ix. p. 503. Lenormant, *Langue Primitive de la Chaldée*, p. 355.





CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRST BEGINNINGS OF THE HEBREW NATION.

IN the genealogical table of the tenth chapter of Genesis, Heber, the founder of the Hebrew race, is classed among the sons of Shem, through Arphaxad, and along with Elam, Asshur, Lud, and Aram. In other words, the Hebrews are connected by common descent, with the people of Elymais or Elam on the Persian Gulf, east of the Tigris ; with the Assyrians on the north-east of that river ; with the people of Arphaxad, still farther north, among the mountains of Southern Armenia, immediately east of what is now the Lake Van ; with the Lydians and the Semitic peoples of Asia Minor ; and with the Aramean or Syrian nations stretching, thence, south-east, to the Euphrates.

The tie by which the Hebrews felt themselves thus linked to these widely separated nations could hardly have been their similarity of language : for the different tribes which bordered or settled in Palestine from the earliest ages, likewise spoke Semitic dialects, connected as closely as possible with the Hebrew ; and yet they were never regarded as related to Israel. Nor did any special intimacy on their part with the chosen people account for the connection recognised, for from an early age the Jews were only a small tribe living far away in the remote south-west. It seems rather, as if ■ strong tradition

lingered among that race of a primitive connection with them, either political, or religious, or both; as if, in early ages, the five future nationalities had formed one common State in the east, before their ancient confederacy was dissolved. The war of the various eastern kings, mentioned in the fourteenth of Genesis, speaks of the likelihood of still earlier political revolutions in these regions; while the traditions of Nimrod's attempt to found a world empire, points, it may be, to the causes of wide national disruption.¹

It is worthy of special remembrance in this connection, even at the risk of repetition, that though for the last fifty years all the peoples speaking a language related to the Hebrew have been called Semitic, the term is vague and indefinite. In antiquity only a part of these races were known by this name; and though such nations as the Phenicians, Philistines, and others, who spoke languages more or less identical with the Hebrew, may have originally had the same common home as Israel, in an unknown pre-historical period—they were no longer reckoned by the Hebrews in Palestine as related to them, but as wholly foreign. Israel, in fact, belonged to an entirely distinct division of the same original stock.²

The tribe to which Abraham, the great forefather of the Hebrews belonged, had its original seat in the district named from Arphaxad,³ the head of the race, and hence known to the Greeks and Romans by the name of

¹ In connection with the traditions of a queen called Semiramis having founded Damascus and Askelon, it is curious to notice that Semiramis was used as a Jewish name, in the form Shemiramoth, (*masc.*) as far back as David's time. See 1 Chron. xv. 18, 20; xvi. 5.

² Ewald, *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 404.

³ Gen. x. 22.

Arrapachitis. It lies north of Assyria in the mountains of Southern Armenia, straight south of the modern city of Kars and of Mount Ararat, and is a tangle of wild hills, rising often to great heights, but intersected by fruitful valleys.¹ The name Arphaxad, in itself, indeed, bears witness to the earliest nationality of the region, for it seems to mean "The stronghold of the Chaldeans."²

The name Hebrew, first given to Abraham³ by the Canaanites, and then to his descendants, as those who had come from beyond the great river Euphrates,⁴ is handed down as that given by Israel also, in the form of Heber, to the ancient founder of their race. But the first glimpse of tribal life appears in the migration of Terah, the father of Abraham, from his native mountains to the plains of Mesopotamia; though it may be that in the names of earlier generations we have some hints of their remoter movements and history. Thus, Peleg, "a dividing,"—Heber's son,—seems to point to the separation of the Arabian branch of Joktan from the future Hebrew stem;⁵ Reu, "the friend," perhaps reminds us of Abraham's tender relation to Jehovah, though it may hint only at a maker of alliances among the hill tribes; Serug, still the name of a district a day's journey north of Harran, has the warlike sense of "the strong one"; Nahor seems to mean "the slayer"; Terah, "the wanderer"; and Haran, "the hill-man." What led Terah to emigrate with his tribe is not told us;

¹ *Dict. of Geog.*, art. Armenia, vol. i.

² *Ewald*, vol. i. p. 405.

³ Gen. xiv. 13.

⁴ From the Hebrew verb, "to cross over."

⁵ Gen. x. 25. Mr. Cyril Graham thinks that Peleg, which also means a river or water-course, refers to the cutting of some of those canals which are found in such numbers between the Tigris and the Euphrates. *Cambridge Essays*, 1858.

possibly it was the same fierce pressure of tribes advancing from beyond, which commonly led to such movements; or perhaps it was a desire to share the rich pasture of the lowlands. His family consisted of three sons, and one daughter, Sarah, the future wife of her half-brother Abraham; for though the children of different mothers they had a common father. One son, Haran, died in "Ur of the Chaldees," "the land of his nativity," leaving as his descendant, Lot, "a veil" or "covering," who afterwards passed on to Canaan with Abraham. Nahor, the second son, stopped on the way, at Harran, and became the grandfather of Laban, "the white Syrian," and Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau. Milcah, "the counsellor," a daughter of Haran, and wife of Terah's son Nahor,—and Sarah, first called Sarai, "the princely one," then Sarah, "the princess;"¹ with Ischah, "she looks abroad," another daughter of Haran not mentioned elsewhere, made up the aggregate heads of the tribe.

There has been no little dispute as to the locality of "Ur of the Chaldees," spoken of as the native land of Haran.² The name Uru has been found on tablets dug from the ruins now known as El Mugheir, to the south of Babylon and east of the Euphrates,³ and this is apparently beyond question the region; for apart from the testimony of the ruins themselves, it was still known as "the place of the Chaldees" shortly before the Christian era.⁴ It has, indeed, been thought by many that it lay

¹ Fürst makes Sarai mean "Jehovah is Lord."

² Gen. xi. 28, 31.

³ Schrader, *Keilinschriften* p. 42. See also Oppert's proofs in the *Jour. of Roy. Asiatic Soc.*, vol. xv. (1855), pp. 260-276.

⁴ Eupolemus, a Greek writer, quoted by Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.*, ix. 17.

in the north, but the identification of the city with Edessa¹ and other places entirely fails. It seems probable that Ur became the name of a district as well as of a city, for the Greek Bible translates it "the country of the Chaldeans": a name given, apparently in later times, when the race thus known migrated thither from the same mountainous north as had been the cradle of the Hebrews.²

The ruins of Mugheir rise on the west side of the Euphrates, in a vast mound so strewn with remains of bricks cemented by bitumen that the present name, which means "the town of asphalte or bitumen," has been given it from the fact. The plain around is so flat and low that when the stream swells each year, the whole region becomes a lake, with Mugheir rising in its midst, approachable only by a boat.³ But it was very different 4,000 years ago. The city was then flourishing; the arts and sciences were cultivated; astronomers watched the heavens; poets composed hymns and epics, and patient scribes stamped, on soft clay tablets, the books which have in part come down to our day. For the ancient race which lived in these lands were, beyond most, given to writing and reading. There were libraries at Senkereh, Babylon, Borsippa, Cutha, Accad, Ur, Erech, Larsa, Nippur, Kalah Chergat, Calah, and Nineveh.⁴ The waters of the Euphrates, moreover,—“the life of the land,”—did not then flood the country, but spread in a

¹ Dean Stanley thinks Edessa was Ur, and gives a picturesque description of it as such. *Jewish History*, vol. i. p. 7.

Prof. Sayce and George Smith also regard Mugheir as Ur, *Hist. of Babylonia*, p. 65.

² Ewald, vol. i. p. 406; Dillmann, p. 224.

³ *Journ. Royal Asiatic Soc.* (1855), vol. xv. pp. 260-276.

⁴ Vigouroux, vol. i. p. 160.

network of sparkling canals and rivulets which carried fertility to the whole landscape.

Ur was one of the most ancient cities of Chaldea, and at the time of Abraham must have been one of the most splendid. The Cushite population on the Lower Tigris and Euphrates had already conquered the Accadians, and were mingled with them; to form in the course of time the race known as Babylonians. Large numbers of bricks stamped with characters more or less undecipherable from their rude simplicity, fortunately reveal the names of the earliest kings, who seem to have shared power in these southern regions with several other local rulers; and of these, two,—known provisionally as Urukh and his son Dungi, who would seem to have lived before Abraham's time,¹—appear as the first known "Kings of Ur."

The power of Urukh had originally extended over only the district round Ur, but had gradually absorbed most of Babylonia: no doubt as the result of fierce wars. A long and prosperous life had followed, marked by monuments more numerous than those of any other king except Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, at Ur itself, he had built at least three sacred structures of great size, besides a temple tower to the moon, on a platform of brick about twenty feet high, from which it rose in we do not know how many storeys; each, like those of Birs Nimrud, smaller than the one below. Abraham would daily see, in the northern part of the city, its huge height rising from the basement in a long square of 198 feet by 133 in the lower storey, and 120 feet by 75 in the second, which is all that can now be traced: for time has utterly ruined it, in spite of its enormous strength. It was still unfinished

¹ Rawlinson (Prof.), however, assigns his date to the lifetime of Terah.

when Uruk^h died; for clay cylinders found in the upper storey show that later Babylonian kings contributed to its completion. But Uruk^h's prisoners of war and slaves must have toiled hard to raise even the part of it he constructed, for it is cased with ten feet thick of burnt bricks, enclosing a dense mass of others only sun-dried; bitumen, the mortar of those regions, binding the vast aggregate into a stony firmness.¹ A sacred observatory tower rose over the highest storey, and there, if it were finished before his day, the patriarch would see the watchers of the heavens—the oldest astronomers in the world—ever busy gathering what they believed to be the intimations of the stars; for the guidance of the king and people, in their public, private, and social life.² Numerous priests in flowing, embroidered robes, chanted their liturgies, offered sacrifice, drew omens, marched in long processions on their religious festivals, and presided in the temple bounds over courts of justice; while in the city were found all the trades and professions which such a development of worship implies.

But Ur was not the only city which King Uruk^h embellished. The ruins of a temple tower built by him at Warka, with its corners **exactly** facing the four cardinal points, still rise a hundred feet above the plain; and so huge was the whole structure that more than 30,000,000 bricks must have been used in its construction.³ Others of the same character; a succession of receding towers

¹ Smith and Sayce's *Babylonia*, p. 69.

² Observations of eclipses commenced at Babylon B.C. 2228,—1,983 years before the capture of the city by Alexander the Great. Lieut. Conder, R.E., *Bible Handbook*, p. 18.

³ Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. p. 199. *Vigouroux*, vol. i. p. 352.

standing one on another, with an observatory above all, had been built by him in other cities also, and doubtless stood in all their glory in the time of Abraham. In all, the position was exactly that of the Tower at Warka. The style is primitive and simple, the bricks of many sizes and badly fitted together, with mud as cement for the sun-dried, and bitumen for that of the burnt; the walls sloped inwards to make them stronger, with arched drains underneath them to secure dryness. In each city the tower was dedicated to the local god; whether the sun or the moon, or one of the planets; or to Sarili, the king of the gods. Two dedication tablets of that of Ur, fortunately, still remain. "Uruk, king of Ur, built the temple of the god Sin (the moon);" and "Uruk, king of Ur, raised a temple to the god Sin, his lord, and also built the fortified wall of Ur." The moon was, indeed, the great god of the city; its splendour in the dark eastern skies, and its importance in astronomical studies, giving it a rank even above that of the sun in this district as in some others.¹ Nor were his temples the only architectural glories of Uruk's reign. A great palace at Ur, known as that of the "supreme prince," further confirmed his claims as one of the great builders of the ancient world. The very extent of the city attests its splendour and that of its ruler, for even its remaining ruins measure four-fifths of a mile across, while its wall, still traceable, is over four miles in circumference.

If the earliest dwellings in Chaldea were simple huts of branches; in the days of Abraham² these had been

¹ It was from its worship of the moon that Ur got the name of *Kamarina* in later times, from *Arab*. *Kamar*, "the moon." The sun was regarded as only a goddess, or as the son of the moon; which, on the other hand, was a god.

² It is curious to find that the name *Abram* was one in use

superseded by solid houses of brick; the alluvial soil yielding exhaustless supplies of clay for every kind of structure. The houses, with fanciful designs painted outside, like the temple towers, stood on platforms. To shut out the heat, the walls of the better class were very thick. The windows were high up and small; the rooms long, narrow, and gloomy, and all opened one into the other; while a central arch formed the entry from without. Trees planted all round served to protect the inmates from the overpowering rays of the sun.¹ Whether Terah and Abraham lived in houses, however, or pitched their tents, as is still done by Arabs, outside the city gate, is a matter of question. Mugheir appears to have been abandoned about B.C. 500; but it and Erech continued to be what they had been from the earliest times, great sacred burial cities, like Abydos in ancient Egypt. The dead were interred with great care and devotion in vast sepulchral mounds, which were thoroughly drained; the body being commonly laid on its left side, with a copper bowl with some dates or other food in its hand; the right one being laid over the bowl as if the departed were eating. The seal, in the shape of a cylinder, worn in life on the wrist, was left there, and cups for drinking, generally of bronze, were placed near.²

The arts of life surrounded the patriarch in this region to an extent we could hardly have anticipated.³ Hand-
among the Assyrians. It occurs as that of an officer of the court of Esarhaddon, B.C. 681-668.

¹ Described from the Assyrian slabs.

² H. G. Tomkins' *Studies on the Life of Abraham*. (Bagster: London, 1879.)

³ The excavations conducted at Niffer (Nipur), Warka, Mugheir, and elsewhere have revealed a new form of speech resembling the Turanian family of languages, but with a vocabulary which is "decidedly Cushite or Ethiopian;" approaching in fact

made pottery of many kinds abounded; if, indeed, the potter's wheel were not already plied so dexterously as it is to-day, to create the many shapes of jars, and vessels, and lamps which are yet found in the old Chaldean graves. Clay tablets stamped with figures and groups of men and animals, displayed the simple skill of the artist, and the stone engraver carved designs of human or divine forms on cylinders of serpentine, jasper, and other stones; to be used for impressing the device on soft clay tablets by rolling it over them. A fine cylindrical seal of the age of King Uruk, recovered by Ker Porter, but subsequently lost, has been copied in various books.¹ A royal personage sits in an armchair, the hind legs of which are carved into the form of deer's legs. He is dressed in a long robe with sleeves, reaching to his ankles, and a hat like many of the felt ones of to-day, while three figures before him, apparently female, have long, flounced, embroidered, and striped dresses, marking a great advancement in textile manufactures. Nor is this so strange, when we remember that, already in Joshua's day, a Babylonish garment kindled the greed of Achan.² Fragments of linen are said to have occurred in the tombs, and the head, in some of them, has been found resting on the remains of a "tasselled cushion of tapestry." Nor were other arts unknown. Sun dials marked the hours of the day, which had already been divided as we now have them; and though stone tools and weapons were still in use, the smith and the jeweller

the Mahra of Southern Arabia, and the Galla of Abyssinia. Thus modern research more and more confirms the statements of the Bible. See Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. p. 65.

¹ For example, in Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. p. 118.

² Josh. vii. 21.

furnished the field, the camp, the house, and the person with a long list of implements, weapons, and ornaments in various metals.

The plain of Mugheir, though now desolate and marshy, was once wondrously fertile. Created by the alluvial deposits of the Euphrates, it rivalled the productiveness of Egypt, watered by the Nile; insomuch that Sir Henry Rawlinson has thought it the site of the garden of Eden. The ruins of Ur lie more than two degrees north of the Persian Gulf, but in Abraham's time the sea extended much farther in that direction than at present; the vast deposits of the Tigris and Euphrates adding new land to their delta, according to those best fitted to judge, at so rapid a rate, that a tract of country not less than a hundred and thirty miles from north to south, and from sixty to seventy broad, has been gained from the sea, for the most part since the patriarch's day;¹ Ur, and even Babylon, being then ports from which ships traded far and near.

From the month of May to November it seldom rains in Chaldea, and the soil is scorched by the burning sun. The Tigris reaches its highest floods about the time when the rains cease, in May; beginning to rise in March and sinking rapidly in the end of May, till it reaches its lowest in June. The rise of the Euphrates, drawn from the northern slopes of the mountains of Armenia, begins a fortnight later, but lasts longer; overflowing the banks far and near, and sometimes causing great disasters. In the time of Abraham, however, the waters were utilized, and danger prevented, by the system of canals, river dykes, and sluices, in use; which enabled the

¹ Rawlinson, *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. p. 6. The growth of the land was formerly, according to some, a mile in 30 years; now it is a mile in about 66. *Vigouroux*, vol. i. p. 334. See before, p. 115.

inhabitants to regulate the inundation as they pleased. Channels of greater or less size, skilfully formed, led the quickening moisture to the roots of every tree or plant. Freely expended when the leaves and flowers were yet to form, they were less so when the fruit had set, while very little was given where it had reached its full size, and only wanted ripening.¹

It is hard to realize, from the marshy flats of the south, or the dry dusty stretches of the north of Chaldea, what the country must have been when the innumerable canals, once the boastful glory of ancient monarchs, but now dry and well nigh effaced, distributed far and near the waters of the great river. Mr. Loftus, however, gives us a glimpse of its appearance when the waters have begun to fill what irrigating channels still remain; and thus helps to revivify the distant past. "Nothing," says he, "could exceed the beauty and luxury of the river side and its now verdant borders. Bee-eaters, kingfishers, herons, pigeons, hawks, and other birds, in all their bright and varied plumage, were flying about, uttering their several cries and scarcely deigning to notice the presence of human beings." Elsewhere he speaks of a thick forest of luxuriant date trees fringing the bank on each side of the river, which supplies the necessary moisture for their nourishment, and for the cultivation of cereals, which flourish even under the shade of the palms. The ebb and flow of the tide is perceptible twenty miles above Korna; quite eighty miles from the Persian Gulf.²

Chaldea produced neither the fig, the olive, nor the vine, but it had a treasure in the palm which made up for their absence. The most beautiful of trees, it is also the most varied in usefulness. Its fruit, hanging in clusters

¹ Allen, *Abraham, his Life, Times, etc.*, p. 3.

² *Chaldea and Susiana*, p. 275.

of amber or gold, is at once pleasant to the eye, delicious, and nourishing,—the food of the poor and the luxury of the rich. The very kernels, when broken up, feed the goats. An incision in the stem yields a drink which takes the place of wine. The crown which grows from the top, and the inner fibres and pith are boiled for food. Mats and baskets are made from the leaves, while the stem furnishes pillars, roofing, and furniture. In Abraham's day it grew almost in forests, in Chaldea.¹ The whole district indeed was amazingly fertile and highly cultivated. Shady with palms, tamarisks, and acacias, it was also rich in pomegranates, and golden with fields of the finest wheat. Millet and sesame grew to a fabulous height, and all kinds of corn plants produced two or even three hundred fold.² Such was the enchanted land which Abraham, at the summons of God, was to exchange for the land of Canaan.

The life of Abraham in Chaldea seems to have been nearly, if not actually, contemporary with a great religious revolution which Sargon I., the founder of a new dynasty, effected throughout all Babylonia. Till then the mingled Sumirs and Accadians had followed a simple and primitive nature worship, different in each town or district; and had not as yet grouped their local divinities into any graduated celestial hierarchy. Their religion, indeed, consisted chiefly in meagre rites; their ideas of the gods were vague and indefinite. But, if M. Lenormant be right in his date,³ Sargon, about 2,000 years before Christ, gave a great impulse to idolatry by establishing over all Mesopotamia a complete and developed system; introduced it may be by Nimrod as the first

¹ Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. pp. 43, 44.

² *Herod.*, i. 193; *Strabo*, xvi. i. 14; *Plin. Hist. Nat.*, xviii. 17.

³ Lenormant, *La Magie*, p. 114.

Cushite monarch, and favoured by king Uruk, but only gradually perfected after many generations, in priestly schools. Two thousand years before the Christian era, says George Smith, the mythology was already completed, and its deities definitely connected into a system which remained with little change down to the close of the kingdom.¹

As in India the old Vedic religion was supplanted by the teachings of the Brahminical schools, and countless gods took the place of the earlier simple religion; so, on the banks of the Euphrates, new divinities, introduced by the religious theorists and philosophers of that distant age, displaced for ever the faith of earlier times. Was this the immediate cause of Abraham being divinely "called" to leave a country now wholly given to idols, and destined to sink thenceforward into ever deeper religious error? It was from his day that we must date the rise of Babylon to be, what it remained for many centuries, the spiritual centre of Western Asia,² as Rome was of medieval Christendom. The old Accadian religious elements were henceforth to blend with the Semitic, introduced by the Cushite conquest, and these, gradually gaining predominance, were to form an elaborate and powerful system of idolatry: nor could

¹ *Chaldean Genesis*, p. 52.

² See Tiele, *Die Assyriologie*, p. 23. Professor Sayce, *Trans. Soc. of Bib. Arch.*, vol. iii. pp. 145 ff. M. Lenormant is of opinion that "it is plain that the full development of astrology cannot have been much earlier than B.C. 2000," but he places the reign of Sargon in the 16th century B.C. The religious revolution in Babylonia would thus still be contemporary with Abraham, though not brought about by Sargon. In another paper of Professor Sayce (*Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. iv., p. 26), I find he assigns Sargon to a date from B.C. 2000 to B.C. 1700.

Abraham and his descendants have founded a pure religion in such an atmosphere.

It is intensely interesting to look back to these glimpses of the rise of great religious systems in extreme antiquity. Strange to say, some of the very hymns which marked the growing development of Chaldean idolatry remain to our day; hymns which Abraham may often have heard rising in measured chant and antiphony from priestly choirs at Ur. One addressed to the moon, extols it as the "Lord, the prince of gods of heaven and earth;" the "Father-god, enlightening the earth;" the "good god;" "the god of the month;" "the Lord of the alabaster house;" "the Lord of crowns;" "the Lord, duly returning;" "the awarder of kingdoms;" "who raises himself by humbling the proud;" "the crescent, mighty-horned;" "the doom-dealer, shining with rounded orb;" "the self-produced, issuing from his home, and pouring forth ever plenteous brightness;" "the high exalted, all producing;" "the Father, who in his circuit renews life in all lands;" "the Lord, whose godhead spreads awe of him, far and wide as sea and sky;" "the guardian of shrines in the land of Accad;" "the sire of gods and men, the guide of childhood;" "the primeval seer, the sole rewarder, fixing the doom of distant days;" "the unshaken chief, whose gracious heart is ever forgetful of its wrongs;" "whose blessings, ever flowing, never cease;" "the leader of the gods, who, from depth to height, bright piercing, opens the gate of heaven."

It continues :—

Father mine, of life the giver, cherishing, beholding all !
 Lord, whose power benign extends over all in heaven and earth !
 Thou drawest forth from heaven the seasons and the rains ;
 Thou watchest life and yieldest showers !
 Who in heaven is high exalted ? Thou, sublime is thy reign !

Who, on earth? Thou, sublime is thy reign!
 Thou revealest thy will in heaven, and celestial spirits praise thee,
 Thou revealest thy will below, and subduest the spirits of earth,
 Thy will shines in heaven like the radiant light;
 On earth thy deeds declare it to me.
 Thou, thy will, who knoweth? With what can man compare it?
 Lord! in heaven and earth, thou Lord of gods, none equals thee.¹

Idolatry was, indeed, striking its roots deep and wide. Ea, the special benefactor of men, was also the patron of irrigation; so vitally needed in those regions. Sin, the moon, of brickmaking and building; San or Shamas, the sun god, of war; Nergal, of hunting; and other deities presided over life in other aspects. The planets and the constellations were consecrated to gods, or rather, regarded as Divine; primitive astronomy measured days and months, and years and cycles, and recorded all the movements and appearances of the heavens, to fix the holy seasons and to read the story of the gods; and astrology drew auguries of good and evil from the phenomena thus observed, to guide men in every detail of their public, private, and social life. Magic and divination, moreover, had their special seat on the Euphrates; and magician priests claimed to avert, by countless spells and incantations, the malignity of innumerable genii and evil spirits which filled the air, the earth, and the abyss below it.

Abraham grew up amidst all this idolatry and superstition. But, to use a figure from the Institutes of Menu, his soul remained pure as a white lily in muddy waters amidst the seductive influences which won over even Terah, his father. In a household which "served other

¹ Lenormant, *Les Prem. Civilisations*, vol. ii. p. 153.

gods”¹ than Jehovah, he remained, from the first, true to the better faith, perhaps brought by his race, long before, from their native mountains in the north. The strength of character, the high religious feeling and the firm courage which this implied, attest a moral greatness of nature. For, wherever he turned, idolatry invited him. In the rising sun he saw a god worshipped by the people of Larsa and Sippara as their defender, and, as in Egypt, bearing different names at morning, noon, and evening. Terah would tell him that it rose as Oud, the sun of life, the foe of demons and sorcerers, and sank as Nindar, into the lower world, to light up the dark realms of death and of the dead. The Maskim, mighty demons who lived in the hollow of the earth, were its giant guardians,² receiving it as it entered. Mercury, the star of the god Nebo, was “prince of the men of Harran,” the district where Terah was to live in his later years, and where he died. The planet Jupiter was the star of Merodach, the patron god of Babylon.³ The five planets were the interpreters of the will of God, and as such were so closely watched, that the library of King Sargon had a special treatise on all the phases of Mars. The very sign for a divinity in Accadian was a star. Twelve chiefs of the gods presided in turn over each month and each sign of the Zodiac, assisted by thirty stars as “counsellor gods;” fifteen above and fifteen below the earth.⁴

Despite all this idolatry there still, however, lingered some traditions of earlier and better days. Legends passed from lip to lip—of the Creation; of the revolt of the evil spirits; of the innocence, temptation, and fall of

¹ Josh. xxiv. 2.

² Lenormant, *Magie*, p. 26.

³ Prof. Sayce. *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. iii. p. 175.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 148.

man; of the Deluge, and the deliverance of Noah and his family; of the Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues. They were cherished, however, not by the old Accadians, but rather in the Cushite or Semitic stock; these two names as yet implying the same people. The prevailing idolatry was a development of the old religion of the Accadians, but for this development and for the traditions we are indebted to their conquerors.

Sacred usages, originally of Divine origin, but sadly corrupted in Abraham's day, also survived. The summit of all the mighty tower temples with which the country abounded, had their altars, on which sacrifices were offered to the gods, in the belief that they would come down only to such lofty sanctuaries; an idea natural to people still clinging to their tradition that the seat of the immortals was on "the Mountain of the East," "or the Mountain of the World," from whose foot their ancestors had come. The ram and the bull were day by day slain and burnt to propitiate the gods. Nor was this the worst, for the Semitic race had learned from the Accadians,¹ the awful practice of human sacrifice,—households, in time of special trouble, even presenting their eldest son as a burnt offering for the sins of the family. But amidst all this fearful degeneracy of religious ideas, the patriarch would hear the seventh day spoken of as "the day of rest for the heart," on which even the king dared not ride out in his chariot, or eat forbidden meats, or violate a long list of minute restrictions.²

With all this excessive religiousness in the outward form, there was, however, as little conception of the essence of true religion as in later heathen nations; for the old Accadian writings seem to know no other sin

¹ Sayce, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. iv. p. 26.

² Fox Talbot, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. p. 427.

than such neglect of the approved propitiatory rites; as seeking the favour of evil spirits by unholy arts, instead of winning over the good spirits by the authorised formulæ duly performed by priestly magicians.¹ The immortality of the soul was, however, universally held, for the tablets speak of its flying up like a bird to heaven, and we still have prayers for the dying, that the "Sun, greatest of the gods, may receive the saved soul into his holy hands."² There is, moreover, among the inscriptions, a fine one, not yet fully translated, describing the soul in heaven, "the land of the Silver Light," clothed in white shining garments, seated in the company of the blessed and fed by the gods themselves, with celestial food. So correctly had this great truth of the first religion been preserved to those times. The belief in demoniacal possession was universal, and indeed all diseases and personal calamities were attributed to it. Every one wore charms and talismans to guard him against evil influences ever hovering round; and, as in our own day, holy water was in vogue as a further means of driving them away.³ The resurrection of the dead was also an article of the public creed, for Marduk or Merodach is addressed as "He who raises the dead to life."⁴ After death the sun was "the Judge of Men." Like the Egyptians, the people among whom Abraham sojourned believed that the actions of men would hereafter be weighed in a balance—the good deeds against the bad—and sentence pronounced accordingly.⁵ Still more, there lingered beneath the surface of the gross polytheism in vogue, the remembrance, how-

¹ Lenormant, *La Magie*, p. 139.

² *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. p. 30.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. iv. p. 50.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 32.

ever faint, of the supreme pristine truth of the Unity of God, though sadly obscured to the multitude by the pantheism and idolatry which had gradually confounded the Creator with His creation, and degraded the Godhead into multitudinous deities displaying their presence in the phenomena of nature.¹

To have kept true to the lofty faith with which he is identified, amidst such communities, and in spite of the apostasy of his father's house; to have turned aside from all that was degraded, superstitious, or false in the popular beliefs around him, while singling out and cherishing all that was divine and pure, implies in Abraham a grandeur of soul, and an instinctive perception of the true and eternal, which place him in the foreground of human greatness. Yet it cannot fully explain so unique a phenomenon to ascribe to him any powers or qualities however lofty; there must have been, besides, as Scripture affirms—a direct revelation and heavenly guidance. Even a writer so calm and unprejudiced as Max Müller can account for it in no other way.²

¹ Lenormant, *Histoire Ancienne*, vol. i. p. 452.

² See p. 23.





CHAPTER XIX.

THE MIGRATION OF ABRAHAM.

THE fusion of the simple Accadian nature-worship with the Cushite or Semitic astro-theology was an event of the first importance, not only for the age in which it took place, but for the whole future history of the world. Henceforward, idolatry rapidly developed itself, and boasted a long hierarchy of gods, an established caste of priests, a minutely prescribed ritual, and the authority of recognised position. Everything points, as has been said, to its having culminated about the time of Abraham's sojourn in Mesopotamia, and the constant tendency of his descendants in after ages to revert to it, shows the influence it already had on his people, before he migrated to Canaan.¹

The spirit of idolatry, moreover, especially in its first vigour, has always been persecuting, and it is easy to believe that the legends of Abraham having suffered for his resolute worship of the One God, may embody the truth.

Jewish tradition, indeed, represents the patriarch as

¹ Mr. St. Chad Boscawen agrees with Prof. Sayce, that Sargon's reign was about B.C. 2000. *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. vi. p. 536. It is a curious fact that, notwithstanding their forefathers leaving the Euphrates so many ages before, the Jews to the last retained their fondness for Asiatic idolatry.

faithful to Jehovah even from childhood. One beautiful story describes him, fancifully enough, as having lived in early boyhood in a cave, and as coming out only after he was a growing lad. "When he first left it," says the legend, "Looking up at the heavens over him, and round upon the earth, he began to think, 'Who could have created all this?' Presently, the sun rose in splendour, and he thought this must be the Maker of the universe, and threw himself down before it and worshipped the whole day. But when evening came the sun sank, and Abraham now thought, this could not be the Creator of all. Then the moon rose in the east, and the countless army of the stars came forth. 'Surely the moon is the Lord of all, and the stars are the host of his servants,' cried Abraham, and bowed himself before the moon and worshipped it. But the moon went down, the light of the stars faded, and the sun appeared again on the edge of the sky. Then he said, 'Truly all these heavenly bodies together could not have created the universe; they listen to the voice of an Unseen Ruler, to whom all owes its being; Him alone will I henceforward worship; before Him only will I henceforth bow.'"¹

The legend goes on to tell us that in those days idolatry spread widely. Nimrod and his people, and Terah and his whole house, worshipped images of wood and stone. Terah, indeed, had not only twelve idols, according to the twelve months, to whom in succession he offered sacrifices, but also made idols and sold them. But Abraham, now fifty years old, returning to his father's house, was sore distressed at this false worship, and set himself to show its folly and worthlessness, that he might teach his father a better way.

When, now, one day, Terah had been from home, and

¹ Beer's *Leben Abraham*, p. 3.

had trusted Abraham to sell the idols, the patriarch resolved to delay no longer carrying out his purpose. He therefore asked each buyer his age, and when told, asked him again, if at his time of life he were not ashamed to pray to the work of men's hands. One buyer having said that he was seventy, Abraham asked him, If he really meant to worship the idol? "Of course," answered the buyer, "he is my god." "Indeed," replied Abraham, "then you are older than your god; you are seventy, and this god was made yesterday." One day a woman came with a dish full of fine meal, and asked that it be set before the gods. As soon as she had gone, Abraham took a stick and broke in pieces all the gods except the largest, in whose hands he put the stick. But when his father came back and saw his idols destroyed, he asked who had done this? "Why should I deny it," replied Abraham; "a woman brought a dish full of fine flour and asked me to set it before the gods. But hardly had I done so before each wanted it, and hearing them clamouring thus for it, the biggest of them took a stick and broke the rest in pieces." "How can you mock me?" retorted Terah. "Have idols reason?" Then Abraham answered, "Do not your ears hear what your mouth speaks?" But Terah, infuriated at him, took him to Nimrod, that he might be punished. "If you will not worship the gods of your father," said the king, "then worship fire." "Why not water," replied Abraham, "which puts out fire?" "Well then, worship water." "Why not, rather, the clouds which hold the water?" "Very well, worship the clouds as well." "But why not, rather, the wind which blows the clouds away?" "Well, worship the wind." "Why not, rather, men, who can resist the wind?" But now Nimrod lost patience, and told him that he spoke only folly. Fire

was *his* god, and he would throw him into it—"and," added he, "may *your* God come and save you from it."

The legend goes on to say that Abraham was forthwith bound on a huge pile of wood, but the flames were suddenly extinguished by a fountain which sprang up from beneath; the wood changed into blossoming fruit trees, a delightful garden grew around, and angels were seen sitting in it with Abraham in their midst.¹

The scene of this legend is said to have been Edessa, the present Oorfa, a town lying at the foot of one of the bare rugged spurs of the Armenian mountains, in the district called Padan-Aram—the "plains of Aram" or Syria.² A high crested crag, the natural fortification of the present citadel, doubly defended by a trench of immense depth, cut out of the living rock behind it, is a striking feature of the city. Another is, an abundant spring issuing in a pool of transparent clearness, and embosomed in a mass of luxuriant verdure, which, amidst the dull brown desert all around, makes, and must always have made, this spot an oasis, a paradise, in the Chaldean wilderness. Round this sacred pool, "The beautiful spring,"—"Callirhoe,"—as it was called by the Greek writers, gather the modern traditions of the patriarch. Hard by, amidst its cypresses, is the mosque, on the spot where he is said to have offered his first prayer; the cool spring itself was the one that burst forth in the midst of the fiery furnace which the infidels had kindled to burn him; its sacred fish, swarming by thousands and thousands, from their long-continued preservation, are cherished by the faithful as under his special patronage, and two Corinthian pillars which stand on the crag are

¹ Beer's *Leben Abraham*, pp. 16-21.

² Aram means "the Highlands."

said to commemorate his deliverance.¹ Nor is it at all certain that these legends have not a centre of historical truth, for the expression of Isaiah² that "God had redeemed Abraham," or "delivered him from death," seems to imply lifelong danger in his earlier career, danger from which his removal to Canaan, in the providence of God, delivered him.

It was not at Edessa, however, but at Harran, the Carrhæ of the Greeks and Romans, famous as the scene of the defeat of Crassus by the Parthians,³ that Terah and his tribe settled, and Abraham spent the last years of his Mesopotamian life. This pastoral region was to become so distinctively the home of that portion of the race which remained on the far side of the Euphrates, that it became known as the "town of Nahor,"⁴ and is frequently mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions as Aramaic or Syrian—which the nationality of Terah's descendants implies.

A vast limestone plateau, seamed by deep ravines, extends east and north-east of Oorfa, but sinks into an alluvial plain to the south. On the slope of a low hill in the midst of this lies Harran, looking out over a wide and richly fertile level, of more than twenty square miles in extent. A circle of low volcanic hills shuts in the view and marks the character of the landscape towards the Euphrates. Small brooks appear after rains, but they soon disappear, and leave the open expanse to the fierce heat of the sun, which ere long justifies the immemorial name, Harran, "the scorched," or "dried up."⁵

¹ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 7.

² Isa. xxix. 22.

³ Plutarch, *Vit. Crass.*, 25, 27, 28.

⁴ Gen. xxiv. 10.

⁵ Professor Sayce, however, explains the name from the Accadian as meaning "road." *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. i. p. 303

In winter the temperature is low, but in summer the heat is intolerable, especially when the wind blows from the Southern Arabian desert. October and November see all traces of vegetation burnt up, except on the edge of any trickle of water, but as soon as rain falls, all nature revives, though only to be speedily withered by the winter winds. Spring alone covers the soil with a comparatively more abiding carpet of grass, varied by countless flowers of every colour, and offering every attraction of form and height.¹

In the town itself, the ruins of an ancient stronghold, built of large blocks of basalt, still attest the military importance of the position. Nor was it less favourably placed for commerce. Four roads passed through it from the earliest times: to Assyria, on the east; to Babylon and the Persian Gulf on the south-east; towards Asia Minor on the north, and to Syria on the south-west,² and these must have brought Abraham into contact with caravans and travellers from all parts of the East and West. They were, moreover, the lines along which armies marched in the constant wars of these ages, and hence, Abraham had very likely seen, while still in Harran, the levies of Elam, Larsa, Shinar, and Northern Mesopotamia; with which, under Chedorlaomer, he was to come into hostile contact thirteen years later, in Palestine.

At the foot of the slope which is crowned by the ruins of the fortress, are nestled the beehive-shaped huts of the Bedouin population, who thus, like the inhabitants of the many villages of the open plain, still use dwellings

¹ Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. xi. p. 292 ff. Chwolson, *Ssabier*, vol. i. p. 303. Malan, *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 87.

² Kiepert's Map.

exactly similar to those seen on ancient Assyrian slabs;¹ scarcity or rather want of timber, forcing them to adopt this singular style of building. Bare stone walls raised without cement into the shape of a sugar loaf, with a hole at the top for light, have in all ages been characteristic of the neighbourhood. Everywhere in the plain one meets traces of ancient canals of irrigation, by which the waters of the Belik were utilized to spread fertility throughout the year on all sides. But the traveller is especially attracted by the "Wells of Rebecca," where Eliezer met the future wife of Isaac, and where Sarah had certainly often been, long before her. Even now, the flocks of Harran gather round them each morning, and the women still come to them to draw water for the day's use.²

The fullest description of this temporary home of Abraham, which became the permanent centre of the eastern branch of his race, is given by Mr. Malan.³ He approached it from the north, where "the green slopes of the lower hills of Armenia" have sunk into a rolling level as the traveller advances from Edessa or Oorfa. "At every step," says he, "on the way to Harran, which now lies as it did of old at about six hours' march from Oorfa, the hills on the right hand and on the left of the plain recede farther and farther, until you find yourself fairly launched on the desert ocean; a boundless plain, strewed at times with patches of the brightest flowers, at other times with rich and green pastures, covered with flocks of sheep and goats feeding together; here and there a few camels, and the son or daughter of their owner tending them. One can quite understand

¹ *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 112.

² Malan's *Philosophy or Truth*, p. 373. *Vigouroux*, vol. i. p. 362.

³ *Philosophy or Truth*, p. 93.

that the sons of this open country, the Bedouin love it, and cannot leave it; no other soil would suit them. The air is so fresh, the horizon is so far, and man feels so free, that it seems made for those whose life is to roam at pleasure, and who own allegiance to none but themselves. The ruins of the castle surmounting a mound makes Harran a landmark plainly visible from every part of the plain. That same day I walked at even to the well I had passed in the afternoon, coming from Oorfa; the well of this, the city of Nahor, 'at the time of the evening—the time when women go out to draw water.' There was a group of them filling, no longer their pitchers, since the steps down which Rebekah went to fetch the water are now blocked up, but filling their waterskins, by drawing water at the well's mouth. Everything around that well bears signs of age and of the wear of time; for as it is the only well of drinkable water there, it is much resorted to. Other wells are only for watering the flocks. There we find the troughs of various height, for camels, for sheep and for goats, for kids and for lambs; there the women wear nose-rings, and bracelets on their arms, some of gold or of silver, and others of brass, or even of glass. One of these was seen in the distance bringing to water her flock of fine patriarchal sheep; ere she reached the well, shepherds, more civil than their brethren of Horeb, had filled the troughs with water for her sheep. She was the Sheik's daughter, the 'beautiful and well-favoured' Sadheefeh. As the shadows of the grass and of the low shrubs around the well lengthened and grew dim, and the sun sank below the horizon, the women left in small groups; the shepherds followed them, and I was left alone in this vast solitude."¹

¹ Noack, in his strange book, *Von Eden nach Golgotha*, supposes Harran to have been in the district of the Lebanon, where he fancies Eden also was.

Towards this district—six hundred miles north-west of Ur as the crow flies, and much more by the winding route of the camel track, and of the great river—Terah led his yet undivided tribe while Abraham was still in his early prime; for when he left Harran at the age of seventy-five he had lived in it so long that he spoke of it as “his country,” and “the home of his kindred.”

The way thither, from the south, brought the patriarch in contact with the chief seats of the civilization of the day. Passing slowly with the long train of loaded camels, and the still slower multitude of his herds and flocks, his tent would be pitched on the third or fourth night thirty miles from Ur,¹ outside the gate of Larsa, the Ellasar of Genesis; with its great temple-tower crowned by the glittering shrine of the sun god Shamas.² Then would come Erech, the modern Warka, fifteen miles north-west of Larsa, with its huge earthen walls six miles in circumference, and its houses reaching fully three miles beyond them, on the east. High above mansion and palace would be seen the tower-temple of Ishtar, the Venus of Chaldea; symbolized by the planet of that name, and famous, or rather infamous, for the obscenities associated with her worship.³ Even yet, the ruins form a hill of a hundred feet high. Sixty miles farther north-west, Calneh, or Nipur would be reached, in a country interlaced, like all these regions, with countless threads and broader channels of irrigating waters. Here, the patriarch would

¹ Ur, in Hebrew means “light,” or “flame,” and may very possibly have given rise to the legends of Abraham having been condemned to be burned alive.

² Shemesh is “Sun” in Hebrew; so nearly were the two languages alike.

³ Imprecations on the prostitute of the goddess Ana (Ishtar) who does not render faithfully her shameful service, still remain on the clay tablets. Lenormant, *La Magie*, p. 4.

pass under the shadow of two mighty temple towers, crowned as usual with the ziggurats of the divinities to whom they were dedicated,—the one, Bel, the great Lord, afterwards known too well in Palestine as Baal, “The light of the gods,” “the lofty One,” “the Father of the gods,” “the Creator,” “the Lord of all,” symbolized by the shining eastern sun; the other, Beltis, “his consort,” “the mother of the gods.”¹ Still journeying north-west, sixty-five miles more would bring the wanderers to Borsippa, with its tremendous tower, Birs Nimrud; the great temple of Merodach, patron of Babylon; worshipped under the symbol of the planet Jupiter.² Fifteen miles farther on Babel itself would come in sight, with its towers and palaces, and wide gardens, and sea of houses, and lofty encircling walls. All these lay within a hundred and fifty miles of Ur. A few miles more, and the bounds of Chaldea were passed. Cutha, from which settlers were to be sent long afterwards to re-people the land of Israel, desolate by the captivity, lay fifteen miles north-east. Next came Sippara, “Book-town,”³—afterwards Sepharvaim, or “the two Book-towns,”—and “Town of the Sun,”⁴ of later history, where, according to legend, the sacred writings were buried, before the Deluge. Terah had still to travel a hundred miles farther north before he passed beyond the edge of the ancient delta or alluvial plain of the Euphrates, and began to ascend the table-land which marks the first step upwards, towards the far-distant mountains of Southern Armenia; and he was still nearly four hundred miles from Harran. But from this

¹ These names are given to Bel and Beltis in the Assyrian inscriptions. Schrader, p. 80. ² Tomkins' *Times of Abraham*, p. 26.

³ So Hitzig. *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, p. 80.

⁴ So on the tablets. See for notices of it, 2 Kings xvii. 24; xviii. 34. Isaiah xxxvi. 19; xxxvii. 18.

point the country was as yet thinly peopled, and the flocks and herds might go where they liked, as the pasture invited them. Harran, "the City of the Heathen" of later times, would not be reached till after a journey of months from Ur.¹

Though now in Padan Aram, "the plains of the highlands," and so far from Chaldea, Abraham would find the idolatry he had hated in the far south still around him. The old Accadian worship still prevailed and the Semitic gods had also been introduced. The planet Mercury,—here known as the god Merodach; possibly a deification of Nimrod;²—is recorded on the tablets as "the prince of the men of Harran,"³ and in the British Museum, a seal cylinder, showing a priest in adoration before his altar, has the inscription "the god of Harran."⁴ Even then, the priests must have been practised astronomers, for the worship of the planets implies a systematic watching of every phase and object of the heavens. It was a land that might please Terah and Nahor for its pastures, and its temples would offer them the idol sanctuaries in which they chose to worship, but the lofty spirit of Abraham craved something higher.

¹ The distances and position are taken from the map and text of Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. Harran was regarded in Roman times as the centre of local heathenism, as Edessa was of Christianity.

² Prof. Sayce. *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. pp. 243 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 247; iii. 168.

⁴ An inscription in the British Museum (K 2701) records an omen in favour of King Esarhaddon (B.C. 681), noticed from the top of the moon temple at Harran. The moon was seen "over the cornfields, with two crowns on its head; a double halo. It was taken as meaning that the king, who was aged, should crown his son also, and this was at once done. The planet Mercury, I should add, stood by the side of the moon—and was interpreted as indicating his now crowned son.

Separation from idolatry had become the fixed passion of his soul. Pure amidst prevailing corruption, true to the worship of the One God amidst universal apostasy; his tent, like the ark of Noah, preserved the hopes of the world in a wild ocean of moral and religious degeneracy. It was under such circumstances that the "call" came to him, we know not how, from God, to carry out his father's long-neglected purpose of leaving the Euphrates and passing on to Canaan in the far south-west. He was now seventy-five years old, and Terah had yet sixty years to live, when the mysterious summons was thus divinely sent; but somewhere about two thousand years before Christ—rather more than less—the resolution was finally taken, by which the future religious history of the world was to spring from the movements of a small Arab tribe.

It is necessary, in trying to realize the patriarch's story, to remember that it was as the chief of a tribe that Abraham set out for Canaan. His brother Nahor, and the part of the clan dependent on him, stayed behind in the plains of Harran; to become the father of twelve Arab tribes—the Nahorites²—as Abraham was to be that of twelve tribes of Hebrews. But the descendants of Nahor were to wander in Edom, on the Euphrates, and over Mesopotamia; in Bashan, and to the east of Jordan, and in Northern Arabia,³ almost unknown and wholly insignificant in history, while those of Abraham were to form the People of God, and to give mankind His Incarnate Son, the Saviour of the world. Nor is it unworthy of notice, in connection with their divergent futures, that Abraham's

¹ "Abraham," in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*, gives the date as B.C. 2146.

² Gen. xxii. 22-24.

³ See table in Bunsen's *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. pp. 78, 79.

posterity alone, of all the tribes descended from Terah, abandoned the nomadic for a settled life.

It was, apparently, an age of special restlessness among the Semitic races. From what causes we know not, they were pressing on, one after another, towards the north or west. The Phenicians had, perhaps long before, migrated from the shores of the Persian Gulf and settled in Palestine; in the islands of the eastern Mediterranean; and on the coasts of the Egyptian delta: Semitic tribes had moved northward from Babylonia to Assyria; the Arameans were ascending the course of the Euphrates and forming colonies on the eastern frontier of Syria; and Terah had resolved on emigrating to Canaan, years ere Abraham actually set out for it.¹ It has even been thought that there are traces of a conquest of Syria and Palestine by Assyria about this time.²

It is impossible that such influences should not have affected the tribe of which Abraham was head, as well as others; for the south-west was then, as it continued to be for ages, the El Dorado or Golden Land of the Arab races of Asia and Syria. There, Palestine lay, beyond the desert; a very Paradise in comparison with it; with its brooks of water, its fountains and depths springing out of valleys and hills; its wheat and barley, its vines and fig trees and pomegranates; its oil-olive and honey.³ And still beyond, the valley of the Nile had irresistible attractions, in its rich fertility, to the Arab tribes far and near. Indeed, from the earliest ages some of them had settled in the east of Egypt, where they were known as the Amu or herdsmen,⁴ and were a constant incitement to other

¹ Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, i. 365. Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. p. 54.

² Kenrick's *Phœnicia*, pp. 141, 340n.

³ Deut. vii. 7.

⁴ Brugsch's *Egypt*, vol. i. p. 7.

related peoples to enter, if possible, a region so different from the wastes they themselves inhabited.

But though such everyday motives might fill the hearts of Abraham's tribe, in discussing over their tent-fires the desirableness of choosing another country than Harran; a far deeper thought lay in the bosom of their chief. To him, the maintenance among his people of the worship of the One Living and True God, endangered so greatly in Mesopotamia, was doubtless, above all things, the supreme consideration. It urged him with the authority of the "voice of God" Himself in his soul—"to get out of his country and away from his kindred, sunk as they were in idolatry, and from his father's house, to a land that would be divinely shown him"—obedience carrying with it the grand promise that his posterity would become a great nation, and that he himself, through them, would be a blessing to the whole world. That the "call" and the promise were alike from God, needs no surer proof than the position of the patriarch in the future religious history of the world.

We are indebted to the speech of St. Stephen before his accusers for the disclosure of the fact, that this "call" had already been given to Abraham before he left Ur of the Chaldees;¹ and it is quite possible that it was through his influence that Terah set out from that region, with the intention of passing on to Canaan. But, from whatever cause, he chose to settle permanently at Harran, and left Abraham, finally, to take the momentous step alone. It is not clear from Genesis whether Terah was dead before the migration of his son; but St. Stephen tells us he was;² so that, as Abraham was seventy-five when he left Harran, and Terah two hundred and five at his death, the birth of the patriarch could not have

¹ Acts vii. 2.

² Acts vii. 4.

taken place before his father's hundred and thirtieth year. This, however, is not singular, as Abraham's marriage with Keturah is set down in the chronology of our Bibles as taking place in his hundred and forty-third year.¹

That Abraham set forth at the head of a large body of tribesmen is evident, from his taking with him all his herds, and all the male and female slaves born in his tents, or whom he had bought in Harran; a multitude so large in the aggregate as to enable him, a few years later, to select from among them, on the moment, three hundred and eighteen men trained to the soldierly defence of the camp, to pursue Chedorlaomer. In fact, though he did not call himself a king, but preferred the simple dignity of a tribal chief, he was always regarded by the Canaanite kings as their equal, and allied himself with them as such.² Josephus,³ quoting from an author now lost,⁴ even tells us that "Abraham ruled in Damascus, being a foreigner, who came with an army out of the land above Babylon, called the land of the Chaldeans. But after a long time he got him up, and removed from that country, with his people also, and came into the land then called the land of Canaan, and this when his posterity were become a multitude." He adds that the name of Abraham was still famous at Damascus, and that a house was still shown as his.⁵ That the Jews should not have preserved traditions of Abraham's connection with Damascus doubtless rose

¹ If Terah were dead before Abraham left Harran, the "seventy years" in Gen. xi. 26 must mean that the youngest son was born when Terah was seventy, and the others at long subsequent dates.

² Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 441.

³ *Ant.*, i. 7, 2.

⁴ Nicolaus Damascenus.

⁵ With all this, there is no ground for thinking of Abraham, with Bertheau (*Geschichte*, p. 218), as heading a great migration of vast masses of people.

from the fact that, apparently in the interval between his death and that of Jacob, that city was taken by the Arameans, or Syrians—from the river Kir, in Armenia—and was thus wholly and permanently rendered a foreign community to the Hebrews. Henceforth, indeed, it was often spoken of by them simply as “Aram.”

The journey from Harrau would naturally lie along the track leading towards the ford of the Euphrates and the road beyond, used as a caravan route to and from Damascus. Leaving the wells and the sanctuary of his tribe,¹ round which his brother Nahor lingered, and where we still find Laban two generations later; he would cross the great river near where the ancient Apamea once stood, and the modern Birs now stands. Thus far up the course of the stream, the steamer *Tigris*, under Col. Chesney, was able to ascend in 1836: a distance of 1,117 miles from the Persian Gulf. The country is rough with hills, the outlying spurs of the great Taurus chain; though pastoral stretches intervene; but it is not till far to the south that the broad levels of Chaldea are reached. It took Abraham two days to reach the great stream rolling at his feet beneath high chalk cliffs, in volume and breadth not unlike the Rhone. The ford by which he crossed it, apparently at Zeugma—a little west of Birs—is still in use. Once on the western side, he was finally committed to the journey on which his heart had so long been set. Others had borne before him the name of “Hebrews,” for that of “Heber,”² a remote ancestor, is almost the same; but henceforth it was peculiarly applicable to him and his descendants, as those who had “passed over” from the far side of the “Great River.”

The old track or road to Damascus stretched on,

¹ *Ewald*, vol. i. p. 445.

² Heber, in Luke iii. 35; Eber, in Gen. x.

south-west, to the future site of another Apamea; passing through Beræa, where Julian halted on his last fatal campaign, after two days' laborious march from Antioch; through Chalcis, with its marsh, where salt is still gathered after the heats; then, south, through Hamath, the future capital of a Syrian kingdom, conquered by David; and on through Emesa, famous in after-days for its magnificent Temple of the Sun, to Damascus: a distance, in all, of between three hundred and fifty and four hundred miles.¹ He had been only about a hundred and thirty miles from the Mediterranean when he left the banks of the Euphrates,² but his journey had run nearly parallel with it, and at Damascus it still lay between fifty and sixty miles to the west.

Dean Stanley has described the circumstances of the journey with a picturesqueness which invites quotation. "All their substance that they had gotten is heaped high on the backs of their kneeling camels. 'The slaves that they had bought in Harran' run along by their sides. Round them are their flocks of sheep and goats, and the asses, moving beneath the towering forms of the camels. The chief is there, amidst the stir of movement, or resting at noon within his black tent, marked out from the rest by his cloak of brilliant scarlet, by the fillet of rope which binds the loose handkerchief round his head, by the spear which he holds in his hand to guide the march, and to fix the encampment. The chief's wife, the princess³ of the tribe, is there in her own tent,⁴ to make

¹ Kiepert's Map.

² On a line with Oorfa the Mediterranean is distant only eighty-three miles.

³ Sarah = princess; Sarai = the queenly one. This is the latest etymology. Earlier explanations made Sarai = my princess; or "noble," or even "contentious," "quarrelsome."

⁴ Gen. xxiv. 67.

the cakes, and prepare the usual meal of milk and butter;¹ the slave or the child is ready to bring in the red lentile soup for the weary hunter,² or to kill the calf for the unexpected guest. Even the ordinary social state is still the same: polygamy, slavery, the exclusiveness of family ties; the period of service for the dowry of a wife; the solemn obligations of hospitality; the temptations, easily followed, into craft and falsehood."³

The way from Damascus to Canaan lay, at first, straight from Damascus, across the green valley of the Pharpar, the arid hill country of Geshur, and the richly-wooded, rolling landscapes of Bashan, with their straths of rich pasture, and the flow of clear waters in every bottom, to Edrei; one of the two capitals of Bashan, and, in after-times, the seat of Og, its Amorite king; on the northern edge of the Hauran, or "Burnt Country." Without water, without access except over rocks and through defiles all but impracticable, the strange city fortress would be as novel a sight to Abraham as its ruins, amongst a wilderness of shattered volcanic rocks, seamed with countless fissures, are to the traveller still. Thence his slow-footed camels, and still slower flocks and herds, would turn westward, towards the Jordan, and descend from the uplands, over which they had hitherto advanced, to the ford, seven miles below the Sea of Galilee. The isolated Phenician colony of Bethshean, in its richly fertile hollow, under Gilboa, would, then, soon be left behind, and climbing the ascent of the hills of Samaria, and crossing over and round them for twenty, or five and twenty miles, they would reach Shechem, in the centre of Palestine, the resting-place of the patriarch for the time.

¹ Gen. xviii. 2-8.

² Gen. xxv. 34.

³ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 11, 12.



CHAPTER XX.

THE FRIEND OF GOD.

HAD Abraham been only the head of an Arab tribe, however famous in his day, his name must have perished long ages ago, like that of other men locally great in their day. That it is venerated still by Jew, Mahometan and Christian alike, is due to his having given the true religion to mankind, and thus being forever identified with it.

It is nevertheless unlikely that he was absolutely the only one in Chaldea who held to the pure faith of earlier ages, in those trying times when idolatry was rapidly spreading and developing; perhaps with fierce bigotry and intolerance. There may have been other Pilgrim Fathers from the Euphrates towards Canaan or Egypt; then, in spite of its moral corruption, so famous for religious wisdom and insight; but if so they have left no trace. In Abraham, however, the almost lost truth shines out again with a splendour that has illuminated all ages since. He stands on the edge of the past, a grand figure; like Abdiel, faithful alone among the faithless; braving all personal danger in defence of his convictions, and leaving behind him home and friends; to wander, at God's command, to unknown lands, that he

might find in them that spiritual freedom denied him in his native country.

But his personal character is not alone the ground of his lofty place in the history of religion. His influence on his household and descendants, in moulding their faith by his own, and thus founding the true kingdom of God amongst men, gives him a world-wide interest. To have rejected Chaldean and Canaanitish idolatry, and in their place to have adopted a spiritual religion, marks him as second only to One other in the history of mankind. His fidelity in this is, indeed, specially noticed to his honour. "I know him," says the Almighty, "that he will charge his children and his descendants after him, to keep the way of Jehovah and live righteously and justly (by doing so)—and because of this, Jehovah will fulfil what He has promised respecting him."¹ Nor was his genuine and lofty fear of God unnoticed or unacknowledged in his own day; for the most powerful and the most religious among the foreign races in whose midst he wandered, were forward to own that "God was with him," and on this account eagerly sought his friendship and blessing.²

The supreme dignity of being called "The Friend of God" alike in the Old and New Testaments,³ is only a further and grander embodiment of the same estimate of his character, under the sanction of the Divine Spirit Himself; and it is striking that even outside the Scriptures its justness has been so widely recognised, that in all Mahometan countries the name "El Khalil Allah," "The Friend of God," or simply "El Khalil,"

¹ Gen. xviii. 19. Translations of Zunz and De Wette. Dillmann explains "I know him," as equivalent to "I have made a special covenant with him." See Amos ii. 2. Hosea xiii. 5.

² *Ewald*, vol. i. p. 456. See Gen. xiv. 18-20; xxi. 22-32.

³ ■ Chron. xx. 7. Isaiah xli. 8. James ii. 23.

has entirely superseded his own. But this title, so unique, is of far higher than any personal significance. It bears with it all that distinguishes a true religion from a false. Not only must God be a Divine Personality to show friendship at all; He must be the One Only God thus to attract to Himself the undivided love and homage of His creatures. He can neither be confounded with the universe, as in Pantheism, nor with idol gods. Still more, it clothes Him with the infinite attractions of a nature which, in loving, can itself be loved, and thus bases religion on its only true footing, the affections and the heart. With the Friend of God, to serve Him is no mere observance of rites or ceremonies; it must be the loyal devotion of the soul and life, transforming man into the spiritual image of Him whom He adores and delights to obey.

Herder's words on Abraham in this connection are characteristic.¹ "Men have sometimes communed with gods, genii, and departed heroes, but not with God, the One God of heaven and earth, in a way so calm and trusting. The stranger has no other friend than He, who had brought him into this remoteness; but Him he possesses as the Friend of friends. What tender passages are there in the intercourse of God with him; how He comforts, directs, cheers him with future hopes; gives him, now, the pledge of a covenant, now, the sign of friendship, now, a new name, now, symbols to impress his heart, and demands now this, now that, return of love to Himself."

It was especially as "The Father of the Faithful," that this transcendent honour was vouchsafed him. "Abraham believed in Jehovah, and He counted it to him for righteousness"—believed with a loving trust,

¹ *Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (1827), vol. ii. p. 11.

for that is the force of the Hebrew word. It means, indeed, not simply that he yielded an intellectual assent, but that he rested on God's word as a house stands immovable on a sure foundation; that he leaned on God as weakness leans on strength; that he reposed in undoubting trust in Him as a child in its mother's arms; that his faith was no intermittent fervour, but abiding, before God, as the stream of a never failing river.¹ No delay of fulfilment ever made him waver; no difficulties or discouragements ever made him doubt. Nor was it a faith which contented itself with merely passive graces; it coloured his whole life; finding its natural expression in obeying the voice of Jehovah, keeping His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws.² To count such a faith as itself righteousness was only to give the same name to the hidden life of the soul and to its outward manifestations.

How hard it must have been to attain such a frame, and to preserve it through life, they can best feel who are most desirous of making it their own. The influence of the universal example of idolatry itself demanded a rare moral courage to surmount; for to dare to be alone is given to very few. And even when he had learned to trust the Unseen Father, how terrible were the trials to which that confidence was exposed!

It has been well remarked that, in its application to Abraham, the title of the Father of the Faithful had a breadth of significance instinctively felt far outside the limits of his own race. He was, indeed, the Father of the chosen people, but in a nobler sense he was, also, the Father of all true believers of every age and nation. As such St. Paul adduces his name in support of a plea for the extension of the promises of God to the

¹ Gesenius' *Lexicon*, p. 65.

² Gen. xxvi. 5.

Gentile as freely as to the Jew, and it is this which makes him the boasted ancestor of the Arab no less than of the Hebrew. "The scene of his life, as of the patriarchs generally, breathes a larger atmosphere than the contracted limits of Palestine—the free air of Mesopotamia and the desert—the neighbourhood of the vast shapes of the Babylonian monarchy on one side, and of Egypt on the other. He is not an ecclesiastic, not an ascetic, not even a learned sage; but a chief, a shepherd, a warrior, full of all the affections and interests of family and household, and wealth and power, and for this very reason the first true type of the religious man, the first representative of the whole Church of God."¹

No details are given of the creed of Abraham, but, in addition to his confession of the One Only Living God, it must have included all that was true in the popular beliefs of Chaldea. This would imply his knowledge of the sabbath; for the seventh day, by a tradition handed down from Eden, was "holy" in his Eastern native land, and was honoured by the cessation of all work on it. He had been accustomed to weekly assemblies for public worship, if only of idols; to religious processions, music, hymns of adoration, and prayer. The burning of incense was familiar to him.² Propitiatory sacrifices of rams and of bulls had been so multiplied in Chaldea that their blood was spoken of as flowing like water. But he had also been familiar with the hideous sight of human sacrifice.³ A sacred ark dedicated to one of the gods seems to have been known in Babylonia from the earliest times.⁴ Some idea of the guilt of sin still

¹ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 21.

² Smith's *Assyr. Discov.*, p. 191.

³ See page 309.

⁴ Smith's *Assyr. Discov.* p. 175. Lists of the gods appear in the inscriptions.

remained, and its due punishment was taught in popular legends, if not otherwise. The fall of the angels and of men; the story of the flood; the belief in the immortality of the soul, in a judgment to come, in a heaven of blessedness, where the holy were robed in white, and enchanting music delighted the senses; in a place of punishment, and perhaps even in the resurrection of the dead, were still articles of the popular creed, and as such must have been shared by Abraham.¹ God Himself was known to him and worshipped as El, or Elohim, a name handed down from the first ages of the world, and long retained in Chaldea and Phenicia; the populations of which, as we have seen, had originally a common home on the Persian Gulf. It is striking however, that with Abraham and in the Bible generally, El is never used alone, but always in such a combination as El Shaddai—the Almighty God; the plural form Elohim being the constant form employed instead. The true explanation of this as only an idiomatic expression of the highest adoration has been already given.² Some, however, have fancied they see in it a lingering trace of polytheism having changed the original singular into a plural, when gods were multiplied. But, if that be so, Abraham, and Israel in all ages after him, wrested it at once and for ever from such an idolatrous use, and consecrated it so strictly to the doctrine of One God, that it never has a plural sense in Scripture when applied to the Divinity; except in rare cases where the gods of the heathen are expressly intended.

Thus it is to Abraham we owe the transmission, not only of the knowledge of many articles of permanent

¹ Proofs of the existence of these beliefs among the Accadians are given at p. 310.

² See p. 11.

religious faith, and of many of the events of the earliest history of the world, utilized afterwards by Moses, under Divine guidance, in the compilation of the first books of Scripture; but also that greatest of all truths, the Unity, Personality, and Holiness of God.¹

How Abraham could thus have given to men a doctrine so sublime, and so utterly unknown outside the sphere of revelation,² is a question of the highest interest, the answer to which cannot perhaps be better given than in the words of Max Müller, a few lines of which have been already quoted. "How is the fact to be explained," he asks, that the three greatest religions of the world, in which the unity of the Deity forms the keynote, are of Semitic origin? Mahometanism, no doubt, is a Semitic religion, and its very core is monotheism. But did Mahomet invent monotheism? Did he invent even a new name of God? Not at all. And how is it with Christianity? Did Christ come to preach faith in a new God? Did he or His disciples invent a new name of God? No. Christ came, not to destroy, but to fulfil, and the God whom He preached was the God of Abraham. And who is the God of Jeremiah, of Elijah, and of Moses? We answer again: The God of Abraham. Thus the faith in the One Living God, which seemed to require the admission of a monotheistic instinct, grafted in every member of the Semitic family, is traced back to one man; to him 'in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' And if from our earliest childhood we have looked upon Abraham, the Friend of God, with love and veneration, his venerable figure will assume still more

¹ We cannot readily doubt that it is to the patriarch we owe also the tables of descent of races and families; for they, too, sprang from a Chaldean centre.

² Bunsen, *Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 100.

majestic proportions, when we see in him the life-spring of that faith which was to unite all the nations of the earth, and the author of that blessing which was to come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. And if we are asked how this one Abraham passed, through the denial of all other gods, to the knowledge of the one God, we are content to answer that *it was by a special divine revelation*, granted to that one man, and handed down by him to Jews, Christians, and Mahometans, to all who believe in the God of Abraham. We want to know more of that man than we do; but even with the little we know of him, he stands before us as a figure, second only to One in the whole history of the world.”¹

That Abraham, the founder of the Hebrew nation and of their religion, should move in their records only as a man among men, marks the infinite contrast between Bible history and all other. There is no cloudy dawn in the annals of the favoured race, no fabulous age of gods or demi-gods, or incredible heroes. Legend, outside Scripture, may attempt to invest their founder with supernatural attributes,² but, in the Bible, he is always a man and nothing more.³ There is no confounding of the Divine and human. God remains absolutely and infinitely self-complete and unapproachable in His essence, and it

¹ The *Times*, April 14th and 15th, 1860.

² See a wonderful collection of such legends in Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, art. Abraham.

³ He is portrayed, above all, as a pattern of moral excellence. He is not the hero to be honoured for mighty deeds by which he exalted himself to a god or demi-god, as the ancestors of other nations are represented in their traditions. He lives in the heart of the world not as a warrior and conqueror, but as a self-sacrificing man, humbly obedient to God, acting and thinking nobly in all purity and simplicity. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. i. p. 9.

is only by an act of immeasurable condescension that even the Father of the Faithful is dignified as "His Friend."¹

Of the outward religious life of Abraham we have only incidental glimpses. Wherever he pitches his tents, an altar forms the natural sanctuary of the encampment, but it is of the simplest materials—rough stones, or modest turf, and it stands under the open sky. Of any sacrifices offered by him, except after the deliverance of Isaac on Mount Moriah, there is no hint; for the victims slain on the occasion of the great covenant granted him by Jehovah were rather customary rites of such an occasion, than offerings in the common acceptation. But whatever forms prevailed, they were carried out by himself, as at once the father and household priest. Each of his four great halting-places in Canaan—Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, and Beersheba—had its altar, no doubt near his tent, which, as that of the sheik of the tribe, would seem to have been usually pitched under the shade of some umbrageous trees, as in the case of the terebinths, or oaks at Mamre and at Shechem, or of the tamarisks at Beersheba.²

¹ 2 Chron. xx. 7. Isa. xli. 8. James ii. 23.

² The word translated "plain" in the English version, Gen. xii. 6; xiii. 18; should be terebinth, the *Pistacia terebinthus* of botanists, and the turpentine tree of the Greek islands. It is very common in the south and east of Palestine, and is generally found in situations too dry and warm for the oak, which, however, it much resembles at a distance. The word "grove" (Gen. xxi. 33), should be translated "tamarisk tree," for which the soil of Beersheba is well suited. Tristram mentions that he frequently pitched his tent under the shade of this kind of tree. Its appearance is very graceful, with its long feathering tufts and branches, closely clad with the minutest of leaves, and surmounted in spring with spikes of beautiful pink blossom, which seem to

The unique position of Abraham in connection with the worship of the true God, and as the father of the chosen people, is marked in his history by such relations to the Almighty as have never before or since been granted to any mere man. Even before his setting out for Canaan, we are told, the pain of leaving his country, and kindred, and his father's house, was softened by gracious communications from above, which stretched the brightness of a great promise, like a rainbow, over the cloud. "I will make of thee," said the Divine intimation, "a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." It is in keeping with the child-like confidence in God by which he was so marked, that the words immediately follow—"So Abram departed, as Jehovah had spoken unto him."¹ A childless man, already seventy-five, it was yet enough for him that he had the word of the Almighty. His faith in the Divine promise gave him an unwavering "confidence in things hoped for," and an abiding "conviction" of the "reality of things not seen;" and it brought its reward. His first encampment of Shechem became, in effect, a formal taking possession for his distant posterity of the land he had entered; for the promise was presently confirmed to him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Years passed, while the tents of the tribe were in turn pitched at Bethel, on the banks of the Nile, and at Hebron, but the promise remained unfulfilled. The faith that had so long endured triumphantly was, however, to be rewarded by a special honour, shown to no one before

envelop the whole tree in one gauzy sheet of colour. Tristram's *Natural History of the Bible*, p. 358.

¹ Gen. xii. 2-4.

or since. As the great patriarch rested in his tent under the terebinths of Mamre, at Hebron, "the word of the Lord came" to him "in a vision," saying "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Undoubting, but sorely perplexed, the long-tried man feels as if any bounty shown him can be of little good, old as he is, and ere long to die childless; with only his head slave, Eliezer of Damascus, as his heir. The custom thus indicated is of immemorial antiquity in the East, and still prevails among the Mahometans of India. In default of children, or where there are only female descendants, the father of a household adopts a slave as his heir and marries him to one of his daughters; to keep the property together.¹ Even in Scripture, indeed, we find the same practice, as in the case of the mighty Jarha, mentioned in the book of Chronicles.²

But the future was richer for the patriarch than he dreamed; for, presently, he seemed, in the vision, to be led outside his tent, and told to look up at the countless stars, glittering in the brightness of a Syrian sky—those stars worshipped in his native land as radiant gods, but now to be regarded only as glories of the Creator's

¹ Forbes' *Oriental Memoirs*. "Go" (Gen. xv. 2). = go hence = die. Luther, rightly "Ich gehe dahin."

² 1 Chron. ii. 34. In Abraham's case Eliezer had been born in his master's tents, and was thus dearer to him than a slave bought from without. The notice of Abraham's chief slave has an allusion to Damascus, which is retained in the Greek Bible. This "son of Meshek," runs the Hebrew—that is, this, my heir presumptive, is "Damesek," or Damascus "Eliezer." "Son of Meshek" means "the son of his inheritance or property." That it was not uncommon to adopt a faithful slave, and make him an heir, when his owner was childless, is seen in the case of Jarha, noticed above. Doubtless, as in this instance, the daughter of the master was often married to a favoured slave, to keep the property in the family.

power. As he did so the words fell on his ear, "like these, innumerable, shall be thy descendants." "A child of thine own shall be thy heir." Ten years had passed since the promise of the land had been given; now it was added that the inheritance should be direct, in his own posterity. It was hard to credit it, at his age, and in his circumstances, but the triumph of his unwavering confidence in God is recorded in the words, "he believed in Jehovah, and He counted it to him for righteousness." His childlike trust was reckoned as a fulfilment of the Divine law of obedience and love.

This loyal faith, which had hitherto found its all-sufficing support in the word of Him who cannot lie, was now, in His infinite condescension, to have the outward assurance of a human form of covenant, to which future ages might permanently appeal. In Abraham's native Chaldea solemn agreements or treaties were confirmed by rites which still continued in use from his day to the fourth century after Christ;¹ and these were to be observed as between God and the patriarch, that he and his descendants might have a memorial of the gracious promise of the Almighty to them. The incident seems to have marked the day after the vision.² A young heifer, a she goat and a ram, each of three years old, were wont to be divided in the ceremony of human engagement between contracting parties, and the pieces set far enough apart to let these pass between them: as if to call down

¹ Von Böhlen's *Genesis*, p. 180. A burning lamp or fire is still used in India, in ratification of a covenant. A person promising anything, if doubted, points to the flame of a lamp, adding, 'that is my witness.' At other times, the parties to a covenant confirm it by saying, 'We invoke the lamp of the Temple.' Roberts' *Illustrations*.

² *Delitzsch and Ewald*.

on themselves the fate of the victims, if they broke the covenant thus ratified. In Abraham's case a turtle dove and a young pigeon were added, apparently as an offering. Each circumstance usual in human covenants was rigidly observed, even to the age of the creatures slain; for three was apparently the sacred number constantly used in pledges, oaths, and treaties.¹

The divided pieces duly set at sufficient distances apart; Abraham, watchful and steadfast, stayed near to guard them, and await the end. Ere long, when the sun began to set, birds of prey, of evil omen, swooped down at the carcases, but only to be driven off.

Presently, as the short twilight of the East was giving place to night, the patriarch sank into a deep sleep—the common medium of Divine visions. “And, lo, a horror of great darkness” seemed, in his sleep to fall on him—and he heard words disclosing future sufferings to be borne by his posterity; of which the birds of bad omen and this gloom had been the fitting precursors. But, now, its blackness is strangely broken, for between the pieces of the victims are seen passing “a smoking furnace and a burning lamp”²—the symbols of the presence of the Almighty—and, in keeping with the brightness, the sacred words of a covenant are heard, in which the whole land is formally given to Abraham, from the river of Egypt³ to the great river, the river Euphrates. The

¹ Ewald's *Alter.*, p. 177. Dillmann's *Genesis*, pp. 172, 260.

² The word “furnace,” is Tannur—a large round pot of earthen or other materials, two or three feet high, narrowing towards the top. It is used for an oven by being heated within; the dough is then spread on its glowing sides, where it presently forms thin cakes. See *Illustration*, p. 436. The Tannur is still used in the East.

The word “lamp,” is Lappid = Greek, Lampas, a lamp or torch. In Ex. xx. 18, it is translated “lightnings.” See, also, Judg. iv. 4.

³ The river of Egypt is the Wadi el Arish, a torrent bed on the

gift was from God, and He alone was making the promise, so that the symbols of His sanction only were seen, and thus was confirmed, by a sacred pledge, this wondrous covenant between God and man.

In establishing the kingdom of God amongst men it was still, however, necessary that its members should have some mark to distinguish and separate them from the idolatrous people around; and for this purpose the rite of circumcision was adopted. It had been practised before, by various races, but henceforth it was to become the special badge of the chosen people. The Chaldeans, Abraham's own people knew nothing of it, nor did the tribes of Palestine; except perhaps the Phenicians;¹ but the Egyptians had practised it from immemorial antiquity.² It is, however, indifferent, whether this be so or not, for its introduction among the Hebrews had a special and independent significance; and, in any case, it stands only in the same relation to Divine truth as the use of sacrifice, which obtained before Moses; or of baptism, which was practised before Christ gave it the dignity of a sacrament. To Abraham and his posterity circumcision was an abiding sign of consecration to God, and of admission into the congregation of Jehovah. The nations around had their distinctive forms of dedication to their idols, in the fanciful trimming of their beards and hair, forbidden so strictly to the Jews,³ and in the tatooing the south of Philistia. The Euphrates became the boundary of the kingdom of Israel under David. 1 Kings iv. 21; viii. 65.

¹ Jos., *Ant.*, viii. 10, 3. His seemingly contradictory testimony is cleared up by passages in Herodotus. Yet in Ezekiel's time they do not seem to have been circumcised, unless the language of Ezek. xxxii, 30, means by uncircumcised, simply heathen, unclean.

² Ebers' *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, pp. 280, 281.

³ Lev. xix. 27.

sign of a god on the brow, the arm, or the hand,¹ as is still common in the East. But circumcision was much more than this, for it presented the child or the man as an offering to God—a part of the body standing for the whole—and tacitly owned that even life was rightfully His, though redeemed by so slight and typical a substitution.² And though in later ages a mark of division and narrowness, in the tents of the early Hebrews it was only a much needed and abiding badge of separation from the degenerate races amidst which they lived, and of consecration to Jehovah.³

The institution of this rite marks the formal establishment of the true religion among the posterity of

¹ Isa. xlv. 5. "Subscribe with his hand unto the Lord," should be "writes on his hand the name or sign of Jehovah."

² Ewald's *Alter.*, p. 124.

³ Wilkinson has found proof of the practice of circumcision in Egypt as early as the fourth dynasty, that is, long before Abraham (vol. v. p. 318). There is also an instructive painting of the time of the Oppression of the Jews in Egypt, showing the mode of performing the rite. It is described by Chabas, *Revue Archæologique* (1861), pp. 298 ff. Nearly all mummies, moreover, are circumcised. Ebers, p. 233. The Jews circumcise on the eighth day: the Mahometans, properly in the thirteenth year, as the time when Ishmael was circumcised. The rite has been found widely practised where it might have been least expected—among the negroes of the Congo and many African tribes, including the Caffres; and also in the Fiji islands; among the Indians of Central America, the ancient Mexicans and other Indian races. Curiously, *The Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i. p. 122, and *Land and the Book*, p. 590, not knowing the evidence of the Egyptian monuments, suppose that the priests of Pharaoh learned about circumcision from Joseph. The remark of Michaelis is acute, that if Abraham had not already known about it, more minute directions would have been given him. *Mos. Recht*, vol. iv. p. 185. Ebers (p. 233) says, that, in Egypt, as among the Hebrews, "uncircumcised" was equal to "unclean"; "circumcised," to "clean," or "pure."

Abraham, and was thus the first step in that gracious plan, which culminated in the life and death of our Divine Saviour. Henceforward, Abraham and his tribe bore in their persons a pledge of loyalty to God, and of a life worthy of Him. To mark the great occasion, the promise of the birth of a son within a year—the child of Sarah—accompanied the institution; and the name Abraham, the “Father of a multitude (of nations),” was substituted for Abram, the “exalted Father” or tribal head, while that of Sarah, “the princess,” took the place of Sarai, “the princely.” Abraham, now ninety years old, had lived for twenty-three years among the corrupt and idolatrous tribes of Canaan. Henceforth, through this self-revelation of God, the contrast between Him and the vain gods around rose in his soul to its full greatness and immeasurable significance. From this time he recognises and worships God as El Shaddai, the God who has and exercises all power; and holds himself and his race as for ever separated from every god but Him. His relation towards Him is henceforth closer and nobler than that of other men, for he holds from Him a covenant, divinely sealed, constituting him and his posterity the People of God. Already, in the days of Moses, circumcision is assumed as an established rite, long prevalent; the badge of Israel as the chosen race.





CHAPTER XXI.

PALESTINE AND EGYPT IN ABRAHAM'S DAY.

THE land to which Abraham had been divinely led was one in keeping with the great purpose of God; that to his descendants should be committed, pre-eminently, the religious education of the world. Lying in the centre of the then known world; in close contact at once with Europe, Asia, and Africa; spiritual influences would radiate from it to a wider circumference than was possible from any other country. Its wide variety of climate, moreover, embracing every gradation between that of temperate regions, in the district of Lebanon, and that of the sub-tropical, in the valley of the Jordan; secured that the revelation which was to go forth from it to the whole world, would embody a range of natural experiences which would fit it for all countries and populations; for its imagery and modes of thought must necessarily be coloured by its composition in a land which was, in effect, an epitome of the habitable world.

Moreover, its delightful brightness, and the fruitfulness of its soil, which did not require the toilsome cultivation necessary in lands like Egypt; and its nearness to countries from whose resources it could easily procure what it did not itself yield, were fitted to raise its people almost at once above the need of a struggle for their primary

wants; and thus to give freedom and leisure for higher thoughts. Nor could the fact that Canaan was only a narrow strip of coast, hemmed in on one side by the terrible desert and on the other by the boundless ocean, be without influence on the religious life, in the vivid contrasts it offered of abundance and want, and of life and death.

Both Palestine and Egypt, appear in the earliest glimpses we have of them, as lands already occupied by a settled population, with towns and governments. An Egyptian speaks, even before Abraham's day, of its corn-fields, figs, vineyards and fortresses;¹ and it is noted in Genesis that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan, or Tanis, in Egypt; an Asiatic settlement which carried to the valley of the Nile the worship of Baal, the chief god of the Hittites.² An Egyptian of a later date, but still earlier than the patriarch, speaks of it as "abounding in wine more than in water," of the plentifulness of its honey, and of its palms; adding that all its trees were fruit-bearing, and that it yielded barley and wheat, and had no end of cattle.³ As to its olives, they were so abundant that one district had an olive tree for its hieroglyphic sign.

But amidst all this early civilization there had already spread a profound moral corruption. Human sacrifice marked the worship of the gods, and unnatural sins received their name from Sodom, one of the Canaanite towns; nor was it possible that any population which might settle in their midst could escape being more or less affected by these baneful influences.

¹ Chabas *Études*, pp. 106-114. Brugsch's *History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 100. *Les Pap. Hiératiques de Berlin* (Chabas), pp. 79, 85.

² *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. iii. p. 113.

³ *Story of Saneha; Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 139. *Maspero*, pp. 108-110.

Yet, withal, the natural phenomena of the country seemed to provide special Divine warnings to rouse its people from evil and urge them to a nobler life. Earthquakes of great violence were not unknown; for the cities of the plain perished by one, and Ainos records another in the days of King Uzziah.¹ Violent floods not unfrequently wasted its valleys.² Terrible storms and burning winds from the desert swept over it at times; seasons of drought brought after them famine; and visitations of grasshoppers and other insect plagues were only too frequent.³ Swift death came with the plague,⁴ and hateful diseases, like leprosy, clung to numbers through life, while property and even existence were constantly exposed to the sudden inroads of enemies; for Palestine was at all times coveted by the nations round it. In the hand of God such judgments might well rouse His people to watchfulness, and, indeed, often won them back to a higher life, when urged by the voice of their prophets.

When we remember how large a space the smallest oasis, or even a well, occupies in Arab chronicles, as the scene of vehement and bloody disputes for its possession, it may be readily conceived how eager the struggle must have been, from the earliest times, for a land which seemed the paradise of the world to the dwellers in the waste and thirsty regions to the east and south of it. Hence, from the first, we find Canaan peopled by many races, each tenaciously holding its district, however small, and refusing to lose its individuality amidst the new waves of population pressing in from time to time. What the Caucasus was to the Aryan races, Palestine was to

¹ Amos i. 1. Tiberias was almost destroyed by an earthquake in 1837.

² Judges v. 21. Amos viii. 8.

³ Joel i. and ii.

⁴ Amos iv. 10.

the Semitic ; in both, a crowd of tribes, independent of each other, thronged to take possession of the tempting valleys. In the days of Abraham, however, there was still much open space for pasture between the bounds of the various peoples.

Of the original inhabitants of the Holy Land it is difficult to speak with confidence, but they seem to have survived in Abraham's time and still later, in the Horites or Cave dwellers, who, latterly, were found chiefly in Mount Seir. It may perhaps be of them that Job speaks, ages later, as driven from their possessions into the most barren parts of Mount Seir, by invaders, and maintaining their lives only in the utmost misery ; though still fierce, when opportunity offered, against their conquerors.¹

Part of the country on both sides of the Jordan was held by a race of men, known variously as the Refaim, the Emim, the Zamzummim, the Sons of Anak,² and the Amorites. This last name, indeed, simply means dwellers on the hill tops, from their custom of building their fortified towns on heights, like the castles of the robber knights of Europe in the middle ages. As I have noticed before, the Hebrews were struck with awe by their height and bulk of body, and looked on them as giants ; as the Goths of antiquity were regarded in their day, or as the splendid north European races of the present time are regarded now, among less nobly grown peoples.³ "The Amorites," says Amos,⁴ centuries later, are "high as a

¹ Job xxiv. 5-8 ; xxx. 1-10. It would be a parallel case to that of the Bushmen, driven into the African desert and mountain caves by stronger races ; or of the Eskimo and the Terra del Fuegians driven into the terrible extremes of the North and South, respectively.

² Anak, = the Wearer of a "chain round the neck," = the King.

³ See p. 188.

⁴ See p. 253.

cedar, and strong as an oak,"¹ and with this they were naturally warlike and fierce. Their country, called by the Egyptians, from their name, Amar, reached from the heights of Akrabbim, the "Scorpion Steps" of the central hills,² far into the Negeb or South Country of Judah, and also on the south of the Dead Sea east and south, embracing Bashan and the country south of it, on the east of the Jordan. Part of them, under the name of Jebusites, held Jerusalem till the days of David,³ and the hills long their chief seat still retain the names of "Amarin" among the fellahs. Two of their fortified towns, Debir and Kadesh, are yet to be seen on Egyptian monuments. The former is apparently the same as Kiriath Sepher, or Book-town,⁴ a proof in its name of an advanced civilization. The latter, mentioned in the invasion of Chedorlaomer in Abraham's day, is represented as built on a hill side, with a stream at the foot, and embosomed in trees, showing a very different condition of the far south of Palestine in that age from its present characteristics. East of the Jordan their chief city was Ashteroth Karnaim, the "city of the two-horned Ashteroth,"—the crested moon—which was worshipped under the form of this goddess or Astarte, the Istar of Assyria, to whom the moon and the planet Venus⁵ were sacred.⁶ Nor are we without some glimpses of even the

¹ A valley at Jerusalem bore the name of the Valley of Refaim or of "the giants," till the days of Joshua, and even much later. Josh. xviii. 16. Isa. xvii. 5. Ezekiel says of Jerusalem, "Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite."

² Amos ii. 9.

³ Josh. xvii. 15.

⁴ Prof. Sayce says that Hebron, not Kadesh, was the "City of Books." *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. p. 28. M. Chabas gives the honour to Debir, as in the text.

⁵ Schrader, in *Studien und Kritiken* (1874), p. 337.

⁶ Little is known of the religion of the Amorites, but it was evidently borrowed, in part, at least, from Chaldea, and yet differed

personal appearance of this ancient race. The Egyptian monuments represent them as wearing a long close robe with short sleeves, bound round the waist by a girdle; their hair darkened by exposure but elaborately dressed and worn long, sometimes with an ornamented fillet round the head; and with flowing reddish beards, which contrasted strongly with a tawny complexion and blue eyes.¹

In war they used strong chariots, but, like ourselves in the middle ages, their chief arm was the bow; an oblong shield defended the archer from the weapons of the enemy. Moreover, in the picture of the assault of Dapur or Debir, by Rameses II., a shield, pierced with three arrows, and surmounted by a fourth, tied across the top of a flagstaff, glitters over the highest towers of the citadel as their national standard.²

The Amalekites, apparently an Arab race, lived in the extreme south, where only the pasturage of wandering flocks, by tent-using tribes, was possible. They seem, before Abraham's time, to have been one of the strongest and most warlike peoples of North-west Arabia, and had doubtless often invaded Palestine from the south and

from that of the forefathers of the Hebrews (Josh. xxiv. 15). It was, however, largely the same as that of the Phenicians (1 Kings xxi. 26). It is curious to find that the name Senir, given to Hermon, the grandest peak of Lebanon, is an Amorite word. The Refaim or giants were also called Nephilim, which may mean men of a different birth from the common. Oehler, *Herzog*, xxi. p. 417. Graetz, however, thinks it means the "overthrown," in reference to the tradition of their having sought to fight against heaven, at the Tower of Babel. In Genesis vi., indeed, the word translated giants is Nephilim. But see page 188, *note*.

¹ There is an admirable copy of the portrait of an Amorite from the Egyptian monuments, at the beginning of Mr. Tomkins' *Life and Times of Abraham*.

² Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 309

sought to make it their own. They first come before us as holding the whole district from the south of Canaan to Egypt, and also as seated on what were later the hills of Ephraim, which then bore their name. They appear, however, to have been early driven into the desert, but they never forgot that they had once been owners of part of the much coveted land of hills and valleys, and constantly sought to regain their old footing. It was doubtless the fond clinging to the hope of some day making Canaan, or at least part of it, their own again, that caused their fierce Bedouin attacks on Israel on its way from Egypt, cutting off the weary and the stragglers, and harassing the march. In the Hebrews they saw only rival competitors for a great prize, and strove hard to keep them from it; but drew down on themselves, instead, a terrible curse. "I swear," said Moses, "with hand uplifted to the throne of Jehovah, that He proclaims war in Amalek from generation to generation."¹ How this was fulfilled will be seen hereafter; age after age the Hebrews hated and sought to destroy them, till the last known representative of the race, Haman, "the Agagite," that is, "of the royal Amalekite family," was hanged through the influence of Esther, the Jewess, at the court of the king of Persia.

These various races had at one time occupied, more or less wholly, the wide regions beyond the Jordan as far as the Euphrates, and southward to the Red Sea. The few names connected with them which still survive, are apparently Semitic; and the fact that the chiefs, when overcome by Israel in later times, found a refuge among the Philistines,² themselves a branch of the Semitic race, apparently from the colonies which early settled in the eastern islands of the Mediterranean, seems to confirm

¹ Exod. xvii. 16. I give Ewald's translation.

² Josh. ii. 22. 2 Sam. xxi. 16-22

the belief that the primitive population of Palestine was of that great stock.

The Hittites seem to have been a different people from the great confederacy of the Cheta, now known as the Hittite empire, whose strength in Syria tried the whole power of Egypt under Rameses II., four hundred years after Abraham's time. They may, however, have been a related tribe, or an isolated and feeble colony. In Palestine the sons of Heth appear as dwellers in the valleys, in contrast to the mountaineer Amorites,¹ from whom they differed radically in their occupations and modes of life; while striving as far as possible to maintain their independence. We find them scattered from Hebron in the south, to Bethel, in the middle of the land;² fond of peace; living in settled communities; acting through popular assemblies; and marked by a gentle civilization. It was with the Amorites that Abraham allied himself for war; but when he wished secure possession of property he turned to the sons of Heth.

The Perizzites, a name meaning, like that of the Hittites, "dwellers in the open country," were a peaceful race; preferring quiet villages to fortresses, and living in the fertile tracts of Central Palestine,—the graziers, farmers, and peasants of the time, though only few, apparently, in numbers. Like them, the Hivites, another clan, were little inclined to war, but sought a modest industrious life in the central district, where Gibeon was one of their chief towns; a people preferring, like the Phenicians, to submit at once to any invader, and thus secure their commercial interests, rather than endanger them by fighting for independence.³ Their name perhaps points

¹ *Ewald*, vol. i. p. 374. See p. 252.

² Gen. xxiii. 26, 34; xxvii. 46. Judges i. 26.

³ The case of the Gibeonites with Joshua is an instance. It is

to their cities forming free republics, for it may mean "the communities;" though, possibly, it alludes to their position as an "inland people."

The name Canaanite was especially given to the Phœnician settlements in the rich valley of the Jordan, where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah belonged to them, and also the delightful meadows and town of Bethshean, below the Sea of Galilee. Shechem and Hebron, likewise, are thought by some to have been theirs.¹ But their special seat was on the low lands bordering the Mediterranean, where they had been settled, no one knows how long. The keenest business people of antiquity, their name, which originally meant a "lowlander," came gradually to be synonymous with a "trader;" while their famous cities of Sidon and Tyre² were the seats of a wondrous commercial activity and energy. Even in Abraham's day the chimneys of their great glassworks and dyeing factories may have caught the eye from the inland hills, as they still did in the days of Christ; and their vast harbours crowded with sea-going ships, and lined with vast warehouses, may even in the days of the patriarch have been the glory of the land. Everywhere, either as masters of the sea and famous mariners, or as founders of prosperous colonies in the Mediterranean islands, on the coast of the Egyptian delta, and even in distant regions, their energy and prominence made their name an equivalent for the inhabitants of the country generally.

to be noted that the elders and citizens of Gibeon decide the course taken, nor is any king of Gibeon mentioned in the list of cities and kings in Josh. xii. 9-24. Every form of government seems to have had its representative among the Canaanite tribes.

¹ Schrader, in *Riehm*, art. Canaaniter. See p. 249.

² The date of the founding of Old Tyre was given by the priests, as B.C. 2750. Maspero's *Hist. Anc.*, p. 192.

The Philistines, who held the rich plain from the foot of the hills of Judea to the sea after having driven out the peaceful Avites, were a people allied to the Phenicians. They seem to have been a branch of the primitive race which had once spread itself over the whole district of Lebanon and in the Jordan valley, and had in part launched off to Crete and other Mediterranean islands. From thence some returned, it is not known when, to the southern coast of Palestine, and there founded the future kingdom of the Philistines. Their history shows them to have been at once warlike and given to commerce, for they were the first who checked the career of Hebrew conquest in the days of Joshua. But if in this they were very different from the unwarlike Phenicians, they resembled them in concentrating their strength in cities on the sea coast, which they not only fortified, but made the seats of a wide transmarine commerce. Thus, Askalon had a great trade with Cyprus, and boasted of the richest and oldest temple of Venus, the goddess of that island, in any foreign territory. Indeed, the wealth and power of the Philistine cities imply a trade which must have almost rivalled that of Tyre and Sidon, and may perhaps have been largely due to Canaanite settlers from the north. It is likely that the Avites whom they subdued, continued to till the fields for their new masters as they had before for themselves; and we know that the remnants of some of the conquered Canaanite tribes, the Refaim among others, found a home in their territory and helped them in their wars. Thus the Philistines proper may well have devoted themselves, as it seems they did, especially to military power and enterprise; while the country grew rich and strong by the co-operation of other races in more profitable directions.¹

¹ The Philistines to the last were especially warlike, for David

Among these various races, scattered in small communities over the land, Abraham at the head of a tribe, numbering in all, perhaps, several thousands, pitched his tents, on entering Canaan. His immense flocks must have had ample room for pasture without invading the rights of his neighbours, else one so peaceful and just would have chosen other camping grounds. But, in those days, even two such powerful sheiks as himself and Lot, could set up their tents in a spot so central and attractive as the plain of Shechem, without encroaching on any one. There, under the grateful shade of the Oak of Moreh,¹ in the midst of a wide valley, green with grass, grey with olives, dotted with gardens, and musical with rushing springs; between Mount Ebal on one side, Mount Gerizim on the other, and the sloping heights which rise to form the watershed of Central Palestine on the west,² he remained till fresh pastures were needed. Then, leaving the simple altar he had built to Jehovah, as a sacred remembrance of his stay, he and his people moved southwards and pitched their tents on the uplands between Bethel on the west, and Hai, "the ruin heap," on the east, marking the temporary encampment as usual by another rude altar, as a local sanctuary.

A failure of the rains, ere long, however, forced the patriarch to remove once more; this time, for a short had a body guard from among them. The Cherethites and the Pelethites of 2 Sam. xx. 7 are regarded generally as having been Philistines, though the Targum translates the words "archers and slingers."

¹ In Deut. xi. 30, we read of "the oaks of Moreh." The meaning of the word Moreh, is variously given, as "the Teacher" (Schenkel's *Bib. Lex.*), "Arrow Flight," "Early Rain," "Fruitful." Müh-lau and Volck's *H. W. B.* It was very likely the name of the owner of the ground, as in the case of Mamre, at Hebron.

² *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 296. *The Land and The Book*, p. 470.

period, to Egypt; the drought having caused a dearth in Palestine, while the valley of the Nile, watered by the unfailing bounty of the great river, then, as in after ages, attracted the neighbouring peoples in such times of scarcity.¹

Different Semitic tribes, allied to the Hebrews—apparently driven from their former homes in Chaldea and Northern Syria,—had long pressed towards Egypt even in prosperous years, and were gradually filling the Delta to such an extent as threatened political danger. To check their entrance in still greater numbers, which was almost as much dreaded as that of the northern hordes into the Roman empire in later ages, an Egyptian king of an earlier date than Abraham had built a strongly fortified wall across the isthmus of Suez; the prototype of such walls as those of Severus in our own country, or of that of Probus, along the border of the European provinces of Rome. Still, the migration continued, though peacefully; for the Egyptians needed shepherds, and admitted them for their own advantage; but in the end the evil anticipated was realized, apparently after Abraham's time, in the subversion of the native dynasty by "Shepherd Kings" of the hated Amu race; the name for shepherds on the monuments.

The town of Zoan, in the Delta, then known to the Egyptians by the same name as Tyre, was already a

¹ So Herod brought vast stores of wheat from Egypt for the relief of the Jews, in the years B.C. 23 and 24. Jos., *Ant.*, xv. 9, 2. Under Augustus, the wheat tax on Egypt for the wants of Rome, was 3,000,000 bushels a year. Friedländer, *Sittenges. Roms*, vol. i. p. 30. Mr. Finn, in *Sunday at Home* (1872), p. 327, says that in 1870, the Philistine country was almost depopulated, the crops having failed, and the inhabitants having gone to Egypt for food. Egypt, on the other hand, has at times drawn supplies from Palestine, when the Nile has failed to rise.

witness to this tide of Asiatic immigration, for it had been built by Semitic settlers, as shown by the worship followed in it, seven years before Hebron in southern Canaan.

Passing across the uplands of the south country of Canaan, and through the district of Hebron, Abraham would thus find little difficulty in entering a land to which so many of kindred blood had preceded him.

It is thought by some, indeed, that when he visited Egypt the great revolution had already taken place, which drove the native Pharaoh as a fugitive to the distant south, and seated a Shepherd King, of the line known to the Egyptians as the Hyksos,¹ in his place. But it is much more probable that the last kings of the twelfth dynasty, one of the greatest in Egyptian history, were still reigning.²

In either case, when he passed the well guarded frontier wall, a new and strange world would be around him. The vast pyramids were already ancient, for at least eight dynasties had passed away since the first had been built. Populous colonies of Semitic peoples had brought the north of the Delta into high cultivation, and filled it with busy commerce, while to the south of them, the whole valley of the Nile had been united under one sceptre; the risings of the Nile brought into strict control; a vast reservoir of the superfluous waters of each year's inundation provided in the huge artificial lake Moeris, and the country covered with towns, cities and

¹ The word Hyksos is the name of hatred given by the Egyptians to these kings. It means "robber chiefs." Ebers' *Ägypten*, in *Riehm*. Josephus, *C. Ap.*, i. 14, makes it = "shepherd kings."

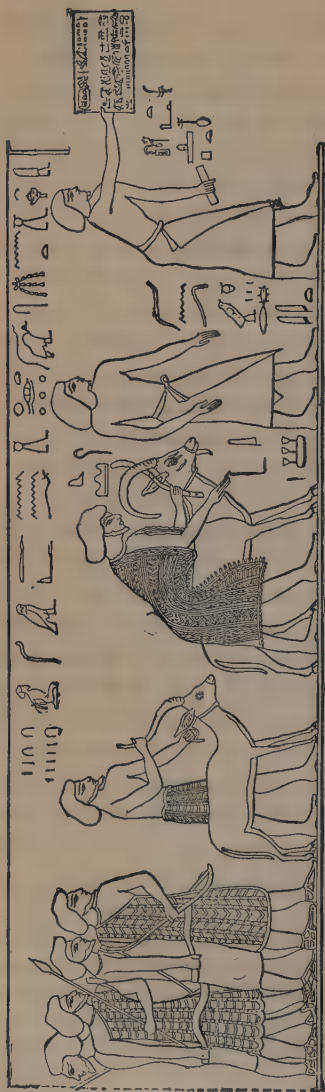
² See Canon Cook, *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. *Excursus on Egypt, etc.* Ebers' *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 256, places the arrival of Abraham before the time of the Hyksos.

villages, the former adorned by great temples and palaces, of which the ruins still excite wonder. A richly cultivated land would ere long open on all sides. Then, as now, the creaking of the great water-wheels, turned by oxen, would proclaim the source of the universal fertility, as they poured far and wide over the fields, through innumerable rivulets and wider channels, the life-giving stream of the Nile. Oxen dragging the plough or treading the corn, as the labourers sang at their work;¹ huge herds of cattle, or flocks of sheep; fragrant gardens, and rich orchards and vineyards, would vary the delightful picture with each hour's advance.

Nor would other equally pleasant details be wanting. The horse was as yet unknown,² but numerous and often beautiful asses served in its stead for all peaceful uses. The people, now of mingled blood, but originally of Asiatic origin,—a branch in fact of the same Cushites as founded the Babylonian kingdom,—were a quiet and happy race, though the lordly nobles and priests looked on the poorer classes with unconcealed disdain. Amidst all, however, the land, as a whole, rejoiced. Hospitality abounded, and if there were toil by day, the evening was cheered by the song and the dance; to the sound of the pipe and the harp. The usual dress was linen, coloured for the people at large, but pure white for the priests; that worn by the richer ladies being often too

¹ Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. ii. p. 43.

² This itself seems a proof that Abraham's visit was before the time of the Hyksos, who introduced the horse to Egypt. We find it there in Joseph's time and later (Gen. xlvii. 17, 18. Exod. ix. 3. Deut. xvii. 16). It was not introduced among the Hebrews till the reign of Solomon. Strabo (xvi. 784), says that the Nabathæans, even in his day, had no horses, and to the present time some tribes of Bedouins have never had any. Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. i. p. 343.



ARRIVAL OF SEMITIC STRANGERS IN ABRAHAM'S TIME. From the Tombs at Beni Hassan.

fine and transparent for modesty. The sportsman had his dogs, to hunt the crocodile or the hippopotamus; the fowler his trained cats, to take birds in the reeds, on the edges of the canals and of the Nile; over whose waters glided the light skiff, the heavy raft laden with huge stones for public buildings or with produce, and the stately barge of nobles or of the palace.

That Abraham should have appeared before Pharaoh has been thought by some critics improbable, but, strange to say, a written copy has been recovered of a formal royal permission to a shepherd tribe to settle in the northern Delta; granted by Menephthah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus. From it we learn that foreigners were always brought before the king on their arrival; to receive liberty to stay in the country

or to be sent back. In the rock tombs hewn out of the steep hill on the east side of the Nile, half way between Memphis and Thebes, at the village of Beni Hassan, "the sons of Hassan,"—an ancient Arab tribe long settled on the spot,—we have, moreover, a striking picture of the reception, by a great dignitary, of the representatives of a Semitic tribe exactly like Abraham's people, and that in the patriarch's own day; for the painting dates from his time.

The Amu,¹ or Semitic foreigners thus brought before us, are nomades, like the Hebrews, and have with them not only their wives and children, but their beasts and household effects, and even their arms; a sure proof of their political independence.

The details of the picture may help us to

¹ Ebers, p. 256.



ARRIVAL OF SEMITIC STRANGERS IN ABRAHAM'S TIME. From the Tombs at Beni Hassan.

realize the circumstances of the appearance of Abraham before Pharaoh. A court scribe ushers in the Amu chief, who wears a sack-like coat, reaching to the knees, in red, white and blue, elaborately bordered and fringed; with ornaments, in stripes and spots, throughout. He and his immediate attendant have removed their sandals, but the rest retain them. The chief leads an ibex, as a gift, bowing with outstretched hands as he presents it, and the next figure holds an antelope by a collar and by its horn. A third person follows, wearing only a kilt. Next come four men in long closed blouses suiting a hot climate; two of them white; two red, white, and blue, in fancy patterns. All the four carry their arms—a spear and bow, with what may be a weapon of bent wood, like an Australian boomerang, for throwing; or possibly, the crooked stick still used by Arabs in driving their camels.¹ An ass follows, with panniers; partly laden, it would seem, with bright coloured cloth, for which Canaan was famous; but also showing the heads of two children nestled in them. Four women without any veils, succeed, wearing the tight-fitting shirt which is still the single garment of Arab girls; the one side kept up by a shoulder strap, but the arms and the other shoulder bare. Their feet are set off by red ankle boots, edged on the top with white. All the figures seem bare-headed, but all have abundant hair; that of the women being bound round the crown by a fillet. A boy holding a spear and wearing a short sack goes before them, and a second ass, bearing a spear and what seems a shield, follows behind; the picture closing with two men, of whom the foremost plays on a large stringed instrument held out in front of him, and the other bears a bow and

¹ Similar throw-sticks are still in use among the Bescharu Arabs of Sinai. Bonomi, *Nineveh*, p. 136. But see p. 368.

quiver, and a club; their only clothing, apparently a tasselled fancy patterned kilt, reaching from the waist to the knees.¹ "I view them," says Lepsius, "as a migrating Hyksos family, who pray to be received into the blessed land, and whose descendants, perhaps, opened the gates to the Semitic conquerors, allied to them by race."²

That Pharaoh should have been attracted by the beauty of Sarah, and should have taken her at once into his harem, as narrated in Genesis, is a striking illustration of the exact keeping of the incident with historical truth. The court officials of the princes of the Nile valley seem to have been specially zealous in their efforts to secure beautiful women for their master. In the D'Orbiney Papyrus, there is an account of a faithless beauty whose sweet smelling locks are found in the room of the Pharaoh, and shown by the slaves to his wise men and scribes. They bring them forthwith to their master as "the locks of a daughter of the god Ra Harmachu," adding, "The blood of that god is in her;" on which the Pharaoh³ does not rest till he has, with great difficulty, secured her; after which he makes her his favourite.⁴ We find, moreover, in a papyrus preserved at Berlin, a story still more strikingly resembling this incident in the life of Abraham. A workman has had his ass seized by an inspector, and reclaims it before the head officer,

¹ See plate in Brugsch's *Egypt*, and in Ebers. The picture on the wall of the tomb is 8 feet long, and 1½ feet high. Ebers' *Ægypten*, pp. 257-8. *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i. pp. 445-6.

² *Letters from Egypt*, English trans. p. 112.

³ Pharaoh is not a proper name, but a title, like "the Czar," or rather like that of the Sultan—"The Sublime Porte"—that is, the "Lofty Gate." It means, literally, "The Great House, or, as we say, "palace," and is used on the monuments as equivalent to "His Majesty." Ebers, p. 264.

⁴ *Papyrus D'Orbiney*, ix.

Meruitens, who in the end refers the matter to the king, a Pharaoh of the eleventh dynasty, and thus before the patriarch's time. After questioning the appellant, the king says, "He does not answer anything said to him. Let a written report be made to us: we comprehend the matter. Meanwhile his wife and children are the king's. Watch secretly over him and supply him with food." The wife and children become royal property, and the officers of the court undertake the maintenance of the husband, as was the case of Abraham.¹

The gifts of Pharaoh to Abraham in honour of Sarah bear the same mark of intimate knowledge of the Egyptian world. They included, we are told, "sheep and oxen, and he asses and men slaves, and women slaves, and she asses, and camels."² That the horse should not be mentioned is striking, for no figure or mention of it appears on the monuments of the Old Kingdom of Egypt, and it seems, as already noticed, to have been first introduced by the Hyksos,³ whom Abraham, therefore, would seem to have preceded. On the monuments of their age it is represented constantly. Long-eared sheep are seen as early as the monuments of the twelfth dynasty—that under which, in all probability, the patriarch visited Egypt. In a tomb beside the Great Pyramid, there is a painting and inscription stating that the dead man owned no fewer than 2,235 common sheep and goats, and 973 of a finer kind, in all 3,208.⁴ Cattle have always been raised in great numbers in

¹ *Les Papyrus hieratiques de Berlin*, F. Chabas, pp. 14, 15.

² Gen. xii. 16. The words "he had," should be translated, "he had given him."

³ *Ebers*, p. 222. See p. 359.

⁴ *Ebers*, p. 266. *Vigouroux*, vol. i. p. 402. *Lepsius, Denkmäler* Abth. ii. T. iii. Blatt ix. 106, 132.

Egypt; for their bones have been dug up from a great depth in the Delta,¹ and the monuments show that from the earliest times they have been employed in the same way as at present. In an inscription of the twelfth dynasty, a functionary called Ameni boasts that he had collected in the nome of Sahou, of which he was prefect, a herd of 3,000 bulls with their heifers. The ox was the animal most commonly used for drawing the plough, and dairy produce played a great part in the food of the Egyptians and in their religious ceremonies. Diodorus relates that in his time 360 bowls were daily filled with milk as offerings, by the priests who celebrated the mysteries of Osiris.² Under the New Empire there were officials who had the inspection of the bulls and heifers of the domain of the god Ammon. The scribe Anna, whose tomb has been discovered at Qurnah, had the office—his epitaph tells us—of selling the dairy produce of that domain.³

The presence of numerous asses in Egypt is proved by the paintings of Beni Hassan, and by the still older tombs near the pyramids, on which whole herds of asses meet us. Rich men boast in their epitaphs of having had them by thousands. In later ages, indeed, the god Set, to whom the ass was sacred, was viewed as “the evil one,” and his special beast consequently became “an abomination to the Egyptians:” but even after it had come to be hated, it was still much used for riding and burdens, though also sacrificed to Set by being thrown from the top of a rock. In the Egypt of Abraham’s

¹ Lyell’s *Antiquity of Man*, p. 41.

² Birch, *A Remarkable Papyrus of the Twelfth Dynasty*. Chabas, *Les Papyrus hieratiques de Berlin*, p. 47. Lepsius, *Denkmäler* Abth. ii. T. iii. Blatt ix. 75.

³ Chabas, *Études*, p. 296.

day, however, it was an object of respect, as it still is in Africa, where, as Sir S. Baker tells us, it would be taken as a compliment rather than the reverse to be told that one "was an ass,"—so sprightly, intelligent and noble a creature is it in these regions.

The gift of camels to Abraham was long thought by hostile critics a proof of the late composition of this part of Genesis; but research has abundantly shown that the animal was known from the earliest ages in Egypt. It is not, indeed, represented on the monuments, but this must have risen from some of the numerous laws which restricted artists of those days to certain figures, drawn by fixed rules. Cocks and hens, which abounded on the Nile from the earliest times, and were even offered in sacrifice to the god Anubis,¹ are thus, in the same way, never found on any monument or in any painting.²

On his recovery of Sarah, Abraham was no longer permitted to remain in Egypt, but was conducted to the frontier wall, out of the country, by an Egyptian guard.³ His stay in Egypt, however, while little flattering to his nobler traits, had added to his already great wealth, for he left it, with Lot, "very rich in cattle and in silver and gold." These metals were well known to the Egyptians of his day, but were as yet scarce in Palestine.⁴ The silver mines of Egypt, in the Eastern desert,⁵ enriched the country with both silver and gold, as did also the tributes from Ethiopia, Central Africa, and other countries.

¹ White and yellow fowls were thus offered. *Isis et Os.*, p. 61.

² The bones of dromedaries have been found in the deepest borings of the Nile mud. Ebers believes the camel to have been in use among the early Phœnician colonists of the Delta coast. It is not an African animal, and must have been brought to the Delta from Asia.

³ Gen. xii. 20.

⁴ Chabas, *Etudes*, p. 109.

⁵ *Wilkinson*, vol. ii. p. 240.

The use of silver even before Abraham is proved by the crown of a king of the eleventh dynasty, now preserved at Leyden. It is of gold and silver, the broad band being of both metals, the nobler one concealing the less precious. In the time of the twelfth dynasty gold was wrought into very fine ornaments, as is seen in the pictures of the Beni Hassan tombs. Amenemha I. had a palace which was richly gilded throughout; with arches of lapis lazuli, and walls crusted with precious stones and bronze. Towards the close of the Ancient Empire coffins were entirely gilded. Dr. Birch has shown that gold washing was followed in Nubia under Amenemha's reign.¹ The turquoise and copper mines of the Sinai peninsula are as old as the pyramids, and in the earliest dynasty we already meet official "overseers of the gold treasury." At a later date, indeed, in the reign of Rameses III., about 1200 B.C.,² there is a picture in the temple of Medinet Habu which shows the wealth of the Pharaohs as having become enormous. The treasury dazzles us with the display of gold and silver, in sacks, jars, or heaps, while commoner metals lie around in great masses like building stones.³ If to this we add the golden chariots, chairs, and footstools, the golden doors and pillars, the vessels of gold, and the universal gilding of chambers, in the palaces of the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom, the royal wealth must abundantly have justified the words of one of the Pharaohs to a servant he wished to honour, that "he should wear gold round his neck, on his back, and on his feet, for having faithfully obeyed in all things."⁴

The two tribes of Abraham and Lot having no longer

¹ *On a Historical Tablet of Rameses II.* *Archæol.* p. 376.

² *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 140.

³ Dümichen, *Hist. Insch.*, 1867.

⁴ Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, T. iii. 97.

permission to remain in Egypt, wandered back by slow marches towards Canaan, over the uplands of the Negeb or South Country, which was then much more fertile than now,¹ to their old encampment between Bethel and Hai. The removal of an Arab camp, to new pasture grounds, must present much the same scene in all ages, and hence that of a tribe which Layard² saw on the march must help us to realize the old world picture of the daily stages of Abraham and Lot. "We found ourselves in the midst of wide spreading flocks of sheep and camels. As far as the eye could reach, to the right, to the left, and in front, still the same moving crowd. Long lines of asses and bullocks, laden with black tents, huge cauldrons and variegated carpets; aged women, and men no longer able to walk, tied on the heap of domestic furniture; infants crammed into saddle bags, their tiny heads thrust through the narrow opening,—balanced on the animal's back by kids or lambs tied on the opposite side; young girls clothed only in the close-fitting Arab shirt, which displayed rather than concealed their graceful forms; mothers with their children on their shoulders; boys driving flocks of lambs; horsemen armed with their long tufted spears, scouring the plains on their fleet mares; riders urging their dromedaries with their short hooked sticks,³ and leading their high-bred steeds by the halter; colts galloping amongst the throng; highborn ladies seated in the centre of huge wings, which extend like those of a butterfly from each side of the camel's hump, and are no less gaudy and variegated. Such was the motley crowd through which we had to wend our way for several hours." Omit the horses and you have a picture of the journeys of Abraham.

¹ Palmer, *On the Desert El Tih, Palestine Fund Reports*, 1870.

² Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. i. p. 50.

³ See p. 362.



CHAPTER XXII.

ABRAHAM'S SECOND RESIDENCE IN CANAAN.

ENCAMPING by the rude altar, which he had erected when formerly near Bethel, with Lot's tents not far from his own, Abraham soon found that increased wealth brought increased troubles. Disputes respecting the use of wells is a constant difficulty when more than one Bedouin encampment has to water its flocks from the same sources, and such strifes rose between the herdsmen of the two patriarchs. Moreover, the pasturage was insufficient for the sheep and cattle of both; and in short, it was advisable that uncle and nephew should part.¹ Nor could a finer illustration of the lofty and unselfish character of Abraham have been shown than that which marked his proposal that this should be the case. Though the whole country had been given him by God Himself, he waived his rights. "Let there," says he, "be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and

¹ When in 1863, the Beni Sakk'r tribe, which is under two sheiks, encamped in the Ghor, just before their raid on the plain of Esdraelon, their tents, like those of the Midianites, covered the ground for miles, as far as the eye could reach from Mount Beisan, and in a week there was not a green blade to be seen, where, before the arrival of these locusts, one stood knee deep in the rank herbage. Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 493.

between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

The features of the locality enable us to fix the very spot where this notable example of following the things that make for peace was uttered. Abraham had apparently built his altar on the summit of the "mountain east of Bethel," where he and Lot then stood, with all the land spread out like a map at their feet. The country around is now only a succession of brown and rounded limestone rocks, rising into bare hills, without a tree to cover them; but it may then have presented lovely park-like glades, as in Gilead, with open pasturage, shaded by well wooded slopes, stretching into the blue distance;¹ "northward, southward, eastward, and westward," in varied beauty. But the richest spot in the landscape, the circle of the Jordan, lay eastward, as it were at their feet; where the deep cleft of the river opened into a broad valley, before its waters finally lost themselves in what is now called the Dead Sea. If Sodom and Gomorrah lay in this northern part, they must have risen from amidst its rich verdure; the traces of which still remain, and at once attract the eye of any one looking down from the hills in the neighbourhood of Bethel. The abundant waters, which still gush from the high western plateau, even now support a mass of vegetation before they are lost in the light loamy soil. But utilized as they then were by irrigation, far and wide, they must have made every part of it, as seen by Abraham and Lot, a very garden of Jehovah—recalling the traditions of their own Eastern Paradise, or the glorious beauty of the scene

¹ Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 169.

they had recently left behind them at Zoan,¹ in Egypt—where the bountiful Nile, led everywhere through the thirsty soil, repaid the care by a fertility and luxuriance that had passed into a proverb.

Nor was natural beauty all. The Jordan cities lay on the great route of Eastern travel, and promised to the keen eye of Lot a rich market for the produce of his flocks and herds, as well as the luxuries and refinements of wealth. More worldly minded than Abraham, he chose this seductive region, forgetful that outward advantage may be bought too dear, if it involved injury, moral or spiritual. Choosing the rich valley, and with it the corrupt civilization which had developed itself fearfully amidst the temptations and influence of an Indian climate; he turned his face to the deep descent where this paradise lay spread out, some thirteen hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean; and, nomade like, pitched his tent outside the gates of Sodom. Abraham, on the other hand, forthwith received a new gift of the whole country from God, as if to mark how much higher in His sight is the gentle spirit that trusts to Him rather than to selfish plans of its own, like that of Lot.

But Hebron, not Bethel, was to be the chief resting-place of Abraham. It offered, on the wide open country round, free pasture; better suited for his flocks and herds, and more abundant. There, under the oaks of Mamre, with their grateful shadow from the noon-day heat, he once more pitched his tent, and near it, as was always his custom, built a third altar to Jehovah. The precise spot may perhaps be marked by the ruins of an ancient enclosure mentioned in Josephus, which still remains to

¹ Zoar in the English version is undoubtedly a misreading for Zoan, which is retained in the Syriac. Zoan was especially rich in irrigation.

the north of Hebron. "There," says the Jewish historian,¹ "stood the terebinth beneath which the patriarch received angels;" a tree as old, it is thought, as the world. It is said to have been burned down so recently as the seventeenth century, after having been an object of almost idolatrous honour for untold ages.²

Here, at last, he could rest, almost at home in this upland vale, with its mingled town and country life, its wells, and its clumps of terebinths; amidst the cool and delightful climate of an elevation of nearly three thousand feet above the sea.³ If Lot had the tropical luxuriance of Sodom, Abraham had the refreshing breeze of the hills, whose soft slopes were sprinkled with stretches of grey olives, and picturesquely mingled groves of pomegranates, figs, apricots, and almonds; while round him spread waving patches of wheat and barley, varied by green gardens, and vineyards so famous, that the Jews believed the vine had been first planted by God's own hand on these fertile slopes. His flocks, moreover, had only to wander to the next heights, beyond this quiet retreat, to have before them unlimited upland pastures.

A strange disturbance of this pleasant region soon, however, broke its peacefulness for a time. The various kingdoms of the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris had long been the scene of stirring events. Great military conquerors had risen, one after another, since the time of Nimrod; until, in Abraham's day, a great empire under the kings of Elam—the mountainous district on the eastern side of the lower Tigris and Euphrates—stretched thence to the shore of the Mediterranean; a distance of nearly a

¹ *Bell. Jud.*, iv. 7, 9.

² *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 142.

³ Hebron. Schenkel's *Bib. Lex.* Sepp's *Jerusalem und das Heilige Land*, vol. i. p. 594.

thousand miles, in a straight line, and of much more by the northern route which alone was practicable for armies. Chedorlaomer, or, as his name is given in the Septuagint, Kodorlogomer, the reigning king, belonged to a dynasty which, by a strange good fortune, has perpetuated its memory even to our times in the old Assyrian inscriptions. In these there is frequent mention of a great conquering line of kings of Elam, the house of the Kudurs,¹ each of whom appended to this common title some personal affix; that of the king mentioned in Genesis being the name of the god Lagomer, a famous divinity of Elam. Still more strangely, an inscription of the Assyrian king Assurbanipal, who reigned B.C. 667,² narrating his conquest of Elam and its capital, Susa—the Shushan of Esther—tells us that he then carried off an image of the goddess Nana, which had been taken from Babylon 1,635 years before, by an Elamite king, Kudurnanhundi, who had “laid hands on the temples of Accad,” or Babylonia.³ This successful invasion of Babylon must therefore have happened about B.C. 2300, a period earlier than Abraham’s time, and strongly confirms the narrative of Genesis in reference to an Elamite empire. Still more, inscriptions have been found on bricks at Mugheir, the ancient Ur, of a Kudurmabuk, of Elam, whose empire extended over South Chaldea, and also over the “Westland,”—that is, according to the usage of the inscriptions, over Canaan,—his dominions consequently reaching from Susiana to the Mediterranean.⁴ Thus the invasion of

¹ Kudur=in Assyrian to “service,” “adoration.” *Western Asiatic Inscriptions*, vol. ii. p. 65. It seems a Finnish word. The Ostiac-Samoyed equivalent is Kote—Kotö=servant.

² *Maspero*, p. 436. Schrader makes the date B.C. 650.

³ Smith’s *History of Assurbanipal* (1871), p. 250.

⁴ Schrader, *Keilinschriften*, p. 48.

Chedorlaomer is virtually established as a historical fact, altogether apart from the testimony of Scripture. In its glory his rule stretched a thousand miles from east to west, and five hundred from north to south.¹

Under this over-lord were various lesser kings, of whom we know little. Amraphel, "the son reigns,"² king of Sinear or Shinar, the ancient Babylon; Arioch, "the servant of the Moon,"³ king of Ellasar, an unknown Mesopotamian town or district⁴—perhaps Larsam, the modern Senkereh, on the east of the Euphrates, between Erech and Ur.⁵ Of this town and district, the inscriptions reveal the name of an ancient king Eriaku, or Uruk, perhaps this Arioch, or some ancestor, but it may be the famous "king of Sumir and Accad,"⁶ lord of Ur, renowned as the great builder of cities, temples, and fortresses. A third completes the list. "Tidal," or rather as the Greek has it, "Thargal," the great chief⁷ of "the Goim,"⁸ apparently the "Guti,"—the Semitic tribes of Northern Mesopotamia, part of whom afterwards became the Assyrian⁹ nation. An invasion of Canaan by Chedorlaomer fourteen years before had subdued the country to him and made it tributary, but after twelve

¹ The Egyptian monuments, in exact accordance with Genesis, state that before the conquest of Canaan by the Hebrews, and till the kings of the eighteenth Pharaonic dynasty, the ruling power in Western Asia was that of the *Rutennu* the peoples inhabiting Assyria. Under Rameses II., the Pharaoh of the Oppression, they no longer, however, held Canaan. The power had passed to the Khetas, or Hittites. Chabas, *Voyage d'un Egyptien*, pp. 318-322.

² Schrader.

³ Lenormant.

⁴ Schrader, *Richm.*, p. 819.

⁵ Lenormant, *La Langue Primitive*, p. 378.

⁶ See p. 297.

⁷ Rawlinson, *Herod.*, i. 364.

⁸ Goim = (in Heb.) Gentiles.

⁹ Lenormant, *La Langue Primitive*, p. 376.

years subjection a general revolt had followed, the payment of the tribute had been refused, and it may be the commercial interests of the populations on the Euphrates threatened; the line of travel on which they depended running from the great river, through the revolted districts, to the gulf of Akaba.¹ In all probability Abraham was still in Harran when the first invading army marched northwards, on its way to the west, and would thus know all it implied when he now heard at Hebron that the Elamite king, with his vassals, had a second time marched into Palestine, to reduce the refractory chiefs once more to obedience.

Crossing the Khabour, perhaps at Arban; the Belik near Harran, and the Euphrates at Carchemish, the invaders would pass south, by Hamath in the Lebanon, and Damascus, to the territory of the rebels.² Sweeping on, along the east of the Jordan, to cut off the allies of the revolted kings, their first blow fell on the gigantic Refaim in their chief town—Ashteroth Karnaim—the sanctuary of Astarte, the goddess of the crested moon. The Zuzim, of Ham, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea,³ apparently the same as the Zamzummim; and the terrible Emim,⁴ at Shaveh Kiriathaim—the upland dis-

¹ Tuch, in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Morgenl. Gesell.* (1847), p. 161.

² Tomkins' *Studies on the Times of Abraham*. An admirable *resumé* of all that is known on the period, from the Assyrian and Egyptian records. The illustrations are prepared with great care.

³ There is still a Hameitat about six miles east of the lower part of the Dead Sea. The name is read Hemta in the Targums, so that the identity of the place seems established. Tristram's *Land of Moab*, p. 117.

⁴ The name Emim means "the terrible race." They held what was afterwards Moab.

The Zamzummim seem to have owed their name to an imitation of what was regarded as their barbarous and unintelligible dialect.

trict of "the Twin Towns," somewhere near, were next attacked. Pressing still south, beyond the Dead Sea, by the valley now known as El Arabah, the miserable Horites, the "Cave men"¹ of the rough mountain range of Seir² presently felt the terrors of war. Marching thence, through a wild and broken country, the conquerors turned their faces to the west till they reached the "Oak of Paran,"³ on the edge of the wilderness of that name; now the desert of El Tih, on the far south-

They held at least part of the country known as that of the Ammonites, on the east of Jordan. Their name comes from a verb, to "hum, to murmur, to make a noise." Fürst, however, thinks it means "the strong."

¹ That cave men lived then in Palestine seems to me to cast doubt on the assumption of a necessarily immense antiquity for the cave men of Europe. Strabo gives a curious account of this race, which was found as far west as Mauretania, and as far east as the Caucasus, but especially in Idumea and the coasts of Abyssinia. The women, he tells us, painted themselves with antimony; the men went about naked, or in skins of cattle, and carried clubs, spears, and shields. The wives were in common, except those of the chiefs, for the race had chiefs. All wore shells round their necks as a protection against witchcraft. Their food consisted not only of flesh, but of the bones and skin of beasts pounded up with it. Some were circumcised, like the Egyptians. But their treatment of the dead was at once the strangest and most revolting of their peculiarities, for they tied the corpse neck and heels together with twigs, and then pelted it with stones amidst shouts and laughter, till they had covered it up, when they laid a ram's horn on the cairn and went off. Their drink is said, by Strabo, to have been the mixed blood and milk of their cattle. Surely this state of degradation in historical periods makes any need of an immense antiquity to account for it in Britain and elsewhere, unnecessary.

Bertheau, *Geschichte der Israeliten* has an elaborate essay on the Horites, pp. 147 ff.

² Seir, means "rough," "rugged."

³ Paran = the hollowed out.

west of Palestine. The countless wadys or dry water-courses hollowed out of the limestone uplands of that region, and giving it its name, were then, however, far richer in fertility and population than now; for nothing is more certain than that the destruction of trees, and the long neglect of irrigation, has since those ages changed the extreme south of Palestine into a literal wilderness, where before there were vineyards, and a settled population.¹ Turning now once more to the east, having reached the limits of their march, the victorious allies came to En-Mishpat, "the spring of judgment," called also Kadesh, "The Sanctuary;" apparently the seat of an ancient oracle, and also the chief encampment of the Amalekites, whose whole country they wasted with fire and sword. Next came the turn of the Amorites, whose chief seat was then at Hazezon Tamar, "the groves of palms," afterwards Engedi, "the fountain of the kid;" a small oasis on the western edge of the Dead Sea, 1,300 feet below the high plateau of Southern Judea, over which the invaders had marched to reach it. And now the enemy had at last almost entered the rich circle of the Jordan, and had only to strike north to reach its wealthy cities and towns:—Sodom, "the walled"; Gomorrah, the town in "the cleft";² Admah, "the strong place";³ Zeboiim, "the town of the gazelles"; perhaps in flattery of its maidens; and Zoar, "the small." There was no chance of escape nor any hope of again, in Tyrian fashion, buying peace by renewed tribute. The population must meet their invaders and fight for their hearths and lives. Each town had its king: Bera, "the gift of God"; Birsha, "the strong"; Shinab, "the glorious"; Shemeber, "the proud,"³ and under them their people,

¹ Palmer's *The Desert of the Tih. Palestine Fund Reports*, 1870.

² *Fürst.* ³ These are the meanings given by Fürst.

came out to battle on the broad plain at the head of the Dead Sea,¹ but only to be utterly overthrown. The ground was full of bitumen pits, that may well have broken their ranks. Bera and Birsha were killed, and the scattered remnant of the force, with the whole population that could, fled to the eastern hills, while the victors sacked the towns and carried off much plunder and many prisoners; among whom were Lot and his family. Painfully remounting the 1,300 feet of cliff on the west of the valley, at the gorge of Engedi, or passing up the line of the Jordan on its eastern side, the conquerors had now only to march home in triumph, laden with spoil and rich in captives. But meanwhile the news of his nephew's misfortunes had reached Abraham at Hebron. As the head of a great tribe, he was on a footing of equality with the kings around, and, though a man of peace, he had all the fire of the Arab when the occasion demanded. This, the fate of his kinsman instantly roused. Calling to his help Mamre, "the manly," Eshcol, "the brave,"² and Aner, "the branch," Amorite chiefs with whom he lived on terms of friendship, they joined their contingents to his levy of three hundred and eighteen trained guards of his own encampment; and the whole, numbering likely over a thousand men, started instantly in pursuit of the retiring foe, who had reached Laish, afterwards known as Dan, on the east side of the Jordan, some thirty miles north of the Sea of Galilee, before they were overtaken. With keen military instinct Abraham had determined on a night surprise; trusting, no doubt, to the carelessness of an Eastern army, which takes little precaution against

¹ Vale of Siddim = Valley of the Broad Plains, lying then, as now, north of the Dead Sea.

² So Hitzig, "all the man"; Dillmann prefers "the grape cluster."

such attacks.¹ No news had reached Chedorlaomer of the pursuit, and his men lay, some asleep and some drunk, says Josephus,² when Abraham—dividing his force into sections acting from different points, like those of Gideon's band, centuries later, in a nearly similar case; or the Chaldeans in their attack in "three bands"³ on the camels of Job—rushed on the great camp, causing an instant panic which soon became a complete rout. Nor did Abraham give them time to rally, but pressing on, chased the fleeing hordes towards the range of Anti-Libanus, for two days, as far as Hobah, north⁴ of Damascus, till they were utterly scattered.⁵ Lot and his family, with the other captives, were thus recovered, with all the plunder taken on their great raid by the invaders.

Returning slowly southwards, rich with the plunder of the camp, and with a long train of rescued Canaanite prisoners of war, Abraham was met by two princes of the country, at some spot known as the King's Vale; perhaps among the uplands of Ephraim,⁶ whither the march must have led as it passed on through Shechem, towards Hebron. The one was the new king of Sodom, who came, doubtless, to do homage to his deliverer as the great man of the day, for Abraham's victory had raised him above any of the local chiefs. He had acted only from friendship to Lot, but by the laws of

¹ Even at this day the Bedouins have no sentinels nor outposts. Burckhardt's *Notes on the Bedouins*, vol. i. p. 303.

² *Ant.*, i. 10, 1.

³ 1 Sam. xi. 11. Job i. 17.

⁴ The English version says "on the left hand of Damascus," but the left in Hebrew means the north, for position was reckoned among the Hebrews with the speaker facing the east. Thus, in Job xxiii. 9, "left" and "right" mean north and south. See p. 242.

⁵ See a vivid picture of this rout in *Land and The Book*, p. 215.

⁶ *Dillmann*, p. 253.

war the whole booty was his ; though he might have been expected to restore the captives recovered to their owners or homes, instead of retaining them as his personal slaves. Such an arrangement the king of Sodom now pressed on him.¹ But he misunderstood the magnanimous nature with which he had to do, for Abraham had undertaken his great task with no ulterior thoughts of gain. "I have lifted up my hand," and sworn "unto Jehovah," said he, "the most high God, the framer² of heaven and earth, that I will not take so much as a thread or the thong of a sandal,³ lest thou shouldst say, 'I have made Abraham rich': save only that which the force have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take what is theirs." Abraham would have nothing to do with Sodom except to render it a service.

But the chief personage who thus came out to welcome the victorious patriarch was one round whom legend has delighted to gather. Melchizedek, the king of righteousness,⁴ ruler of Salem, "priest of the Most High God," who appears in this incident for a moment and then

¹ If any one recovered from an enemy the goods of a friend, they were the property of the conqueror—a hard enough law, which Abraham was above enforcing for himself, though he stood on its letter as regarded his confederates. Michaelis, *Mosaisches Recht*, vol. iii. p. 252.

² Not "possessor," as the English version has it.

³ De Wette's translation. Roberts says it is still a Hindoo saying for having taken nothing, that one has not taken even a piece of the thong of a worn-out sandal. It is also an Arab proverb. Ges., *Thes.* p. 452.

⁴ Or "justice," as Kalisch translates it. It is curious to notice that in Joshua's time the king of Jerusalem bore the name of Adonizedek, "the lord of righteousness." Is this a ground for believing that Salem must have been Jerusalem?

suddenly vanishes, has in all ages, alike from his name, which itself commands respectful awe; his office and faith at such a time, and in such populations; and the silence observed respecting his origin or history, been a favourite subject for speculation. We know neither his parentage, nor the place of his birth, nor his successor in his office and dignities, and hence he offers a striking type of our divine Lord.¹ It is quite possible that, like Abraham, he may have been one of the early Pilgrim Fathers who had left Chaldea, to escape the growing bitterness and intensity of idol worship, which were making fidelity to the faith of purer ages impossible.² His name and that of the place over which he ruled, are purely Semitic, and may thus point to his belonging to the clans of that race beyond the Euphrates.³ But this seems a questionable ground, since the Phenicians, and at least some of the Canaanite tribes, spoke a language almost, if not quite identical with Hebrew, while the tribes beyond the Euphrates spoke Aramaic. Indeed, Abraham's ability to mingle freely with the peoples around him, seems to imply that on entering Canaan he abandoned his native speech and adopted theirs, making Hebrew for the first time the speech of his race.⁴

Melchizedek's pure and holy faith in the "Most High

¹ The Jews, ever fond of the marvellous, affected to regard Melchizedek as a son of Shem—a relic of the long perished golden age of the world.

² Chap. vii.

³ So, Kalisch.

⁴ Bunsen, *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 102. Eichhorn's, *Einleitung* vol. i. p. 59; ii. p. 1. Kalisch's *Bible Studies*, vol. ii. p. 3. It is curious to notice that after having adopted the Hebrew of the Canaanites from Abraham's day, the Jews went back to their original Aramaic, and gave up Hebrew, as soon as they were carried off to Babylon, Abraham's early land.

God" was doubtless a relic of the anciently universal recognition of the One Creator, and is one of the proofs incidentally afforded in such other cases as that of Abimelech, king of Gerar; Jethro, the Midianite; Balaam, from the mountains of Assyria; and Job, the Arab; that God has at no time left Himself without a witness even in lands secluded from the direct privileges of His people. El Eliōn, the name given by Melchizedek to God, was not indeed new or unknown, for El or Il, "the Mighty One," was the ancient supreme god of the Semitic races of Babylonia, and was known in Palestine by the Phenicians; and even the great title, Eliōn, "the Highest," had been adopted by them, corrupt and idolatrous as they had already become. With them, indeed, both names only marked one divine Being among many, though perhaps the highest; nor is it to be overlooked that while Melchizedek uses the general expression "the Most High God," Abraham, in repeating it, prefixes the personal name Jehovah;¹ as if to claim for Him the exclusive right to supreme divinity. With this weighty addition, though not without it, he recognises the God of Melchizedek as Him whom he, himself, worshipped.²

But not only is Melchizedek a king, he is also the first

¹ Gen. xiv. 22. Cohen, *Darstellung des Gottesdienstes*, p. 21, notices this.

² Most critics are of opinion that Salem was Jerusalem; but it has been fancied by some that a place eight miles south of Scythopolis, where John the Baptist laboured, is intended. Jerome tells us that, in his day, the so-called palace of Melchizedek was still shown there. Abraham had certainly to pass by Scythopolis on his return, and hence Salem may have been the seat of Melchizedek's rule. Winer gives striking reasons for preferring Jerusalem. Gesenius thinks Salem, not Jerusalem, was the place. *Thes.*, xiv. 22.

who bears the ancient and sacred, but often much abused name of "*Priest*." The office had not yet been separated from that of king, and, indeed, in after ages it was still nominally applied to the sons of David,¹ and even to humbler personages in the court of Solomon;² but in these cases tradition seems to have retained a title which though once real in similar connections, was now simply one of dignity. From Melchizedek, Abraham accepts a priestly blessing. The highest earthly one in the land, bowing before a still higher spiritual, and recognising in him the servant of God, expresses his gratitude for the signal mercies just vouchsafed him, by giving to God, as represented by His priest, the first tithes of which we read—"the tenth part of all the spoil"—an act which became an authoritative historical precedent among his descendants ever after. Even Jacob, at Bethel remembered it,³ and Moses put it in practice as a public law, that the tenth of the field, the orchard and the herd⁴ should be given to the priests, as to God; besides a tribute from all booty of war.⁵

Ten years had passed since Abraham had entered Canaan, and he was still without an heir, when Sarah, acting on the custom still common in the East, gave one of her female slaves to her husband as a concubine, or wife of secondary rank; with the design of adopting as her own the children of the union.⁶ From among the

¹ 2 Sam. viii. 18. The word "priest" is supposed from the phraseology of the parallel passage, 1 Chron. xviii. 17, to mean here "the first at the king's hand," that is, in rank.

² 1 Kings iv. 5. "Principal officer" is literally a "priest."

³ Gen. xxviii. 22.

⁴ Lev. xxvii. 30 ff.

⁵ Num. xxxi. 31. 2 Sam. viii. 11. Chron. xxvi. 27.

⁶ Jacob's wives did the same, Gen. xxx. 1 ff. The old law of Israel (Ex. xxi. ff) even gave the Hebrew maiden sold by her

slaves brought from Egypt, perhaps given by Pharaoh, one Hagar was selected for this honour; but the result, as too often happens in polygamous countries, was unhappy. Even before a child was born, jealousy sprang up in the mistress towards the maid, who fled to the desert to escape Sarah's anger, and only returned when divinely warned to do so. But the son whom she presently bore—Ishmael, "God hears"—was after a time followed by a son borne by Sarah herself, who, of course, at once took the place of the son of the concubine, as Abraham's heir. Some fifteen years had passed, during which the now disinherited lad had been the acknowledged successor to his father's rank and wealth; and it was not easy either for him or his mother to sink at once into insignificance, and resign the distinction they had so long enjoyed. Heart-burnings naturally followed, and in the end, Sarah would not be contented till both mother and lad were sent away from the encampment, to join some other tribe, and return to Abraham no more. To us it seems strange that the mother of his first-born son should be thus treated; but it has always been the rule in the East that the elevation of a female slave to be a secondary wife or concubine, in no degree affects her servile position; and leaves her children slaves to her owner, like herself liable to be sold away or sent off at a moment's notice, though this is seldom done.¹ In this case, moreover, Hagar was Sarah's property, and would be treated by her as such. Yet it was no slight task to bring Abraham to carry out her will, nor would she apparently have gained her point, had not the patriarch been divinely warned that what seemed to be only harsh father on account of his poverty, a claim on her purchaser, to be made either his own concubine or that of his son.

¹ Michaelis, *Mosaïsches Recht*, vol. ii. pp. 125, 352,

jealousy, was in reality in accordance with an all-wise Providence. Even then, however, he rose up early in the morning, as if fearful that his obedience to the heavenly counsel might fail if he delayed; and, doubtless with a heavy heart, sent mother and son away. Weaning feasts are still usual in the East, and that of Isaac had been the occasion of this final rupture.¹ It led to Ishmael becoming the father of the wide family of Bedouin tribes, afterwards known as Ishmaelites; who ultimately spread over the desert, from the eastern edge of Egypt to the north-west coasts of the Persian Gulf, and also over the Hauran, east of the Jordan, to Lebanon, —that is, as a whole, over all Northern Arabia.²

The disastrous end of the cities of the plain had happened before this breach in the patriarch's circle. The agencies by which it was brought about, and the situation of the doomed towns, have been equally disputed. It is certain, however, that the present Dead Sea is of immensely greater age than the time of Abraham, for it belongs geologically to the oldest seas in the world; its origin reaching back to the period of the Secondary Rocks, when a great part of Southern Germany and Switzerland was as yet below the ocean. Its level stood formerly much higher than now, for ancient beaches

¹ Isaac may have been three or four years old at his weaning, if not older. The child Samuel must have been some size when, on his being weaned, his mother took him to Shiloh and left him there (1 Sam. i. 24). If Isaac was older, weaning must have had a different meaning than it has with us. The Mahometan law prohibits a woman weaning her child before it is two years old, except with the consent of her husband. The mother, in 2 Macc. vii. 27, says she has suckled her son three years. In India a child is weaned only after three years. See *Winer*, art. *Kinder*.

² *Riehm*, art. *Ismael*.

are still to be seen on the rocks three hundred feet above its present surface. Whether it ever joined the Red Sea is disputed: some think it did; others adduce in disproof, the facts that the waters of the Arabah, or gorge south of the Dead Sea, flow into it from a watershed almost midway between the two seas, and that the Gulf of Akaba on the Red Sea, is thirty-five feet higher than the Mediterranean, while the Dead Sea is thirteen hundred feet below it.² It seems most probable that the whole Jordan valley, from Lebanon to the Red Sea, was once a branch of the Indian Ocean, which has been drained and cut off by the subsequent elevation of the country.

The Dead Sea is, in fact, an almost unique phenomenon. Its surface is, as I have said, amazingly depressed below the sea-level, but it lies in a bowl or cauldron itself thirteen hundred feet deep at its lowest point. The edge of this bowl, however, reaches only to two-thirds of its length from north to south, and the depth of the other third is, in great part, no more than thirteen feet. Its lower end is thus, in reality, the edge of the deep bed; hidden by only a few feet of water. The hills on its west shore are of Hippurite³ limestone; a rock of the chalk formation, in which, as in Syria, layers of bitumen, fluid and solid, occur; and also, of rock salt. The whole of the hills, indeed, smell of bitumen, and the chalk marl is so thoroughly impregnated with it at some places that it burns fiercely when kindled. This is especially the

¹ Fraas.

² Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 285.

³ Hippurite is the name of an extinct fossil shell, not unlike a straight horn. Some are a foot long; most very small. In South France and in the Alps it forms almost the entire substance of widely spread and very thick rocks. Brockhaus' *Lexicon*, viii. p. 283. Nicholson's *Palæontology*, vol. i. p. 453.

case between Engedi and the north-west corner, where the shore is lined with a mass of bitumen in which pebbles of all kinds are thickly imbedded.¹ The eastern shore rests throughout on sandstone which, however, at some places is pierced by huge veins and beds of volcanic rock.² The chalk of the west shore reappears only atop of these two; so complete has been the dislocation or "fault" of the two sides, through primeval earthquakes or other convulsions. A tongue of land formed of the debris brought down from the hills, in the course of ages, by torrents, juts out into the lake for two-thirds of its breadth, on the south-east, and marks the beginning of the shallow water.

The Dead Sea has been immemorially a mere reservoir for the waters of the Jordan, and of the mountain torrents which flow into it. The former, alone, discharges into it not less than six million tons of water every twenty-four hours;³ yet the evaporation, from the direct heat of the sun and the reflected heat of the rocks, keeps the balance comparatively even through the year. In winter, indeed, the surface is two or three yards higher than in summer, but this makes little difference in the extent of the sea, except at its shallow southern end. At that part, Gebel Usdum, a huge mountain of rock-salt, capped by gypsum and marl, about seven miles long, and from one-and-a-half to three miles broad, hollowed out by rains and springs, sends a constant addition of brine to the lake; and this, with that which enters it in other parts, has gradually made it more than six times saltier than the open ocean.⁴ Hence nothing living can exist in it. The fish carried down by the Jordan at once die, nor can

¹ Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 277.

² Basalt.

³ Fraas, in *Riehm*, p. 972.

⁴ The ocean has 4 per cent. of salt; the Dead Sea, 26½.

even mussels or corals live in it; but it is a fable that no bird can fly over it or that there are no living creatures on its banks. Dr. Tristram found on the shores, three kinds of kingfishers, gulls, ducks, and grebes, which, he says, live on the fish which enter the sea in shoals and presently die. He collected one hundred and eighteen species of birds, some new to science, on the shores, or swimming or flying over the waters. The cane-brakes which fringe it at some parts are the homes of about forty species of mammalia, several of them animals unknown in England, and innumerable tropical or semi-tropical plants perfume the atmosphere, wherever fresh water can reach. The climate is perfect, and most delicious, and, indeed, there is, perhaps, no place in the world where a sanatorium could be established with so much prospect of benefit as at Ain Jidi (Engedi). There are many spots near the lake where freshwater streams flow throughout the year, and where sweet water bubbles up within a few feet of the salt shore. The rich plain of the Safieh, at the south-east corner of the lake, is cultivated for indigo, maize, and barley, to within a few feet of the water's edge, and the date palm still waves over the mouth of the Arnon and Zerka.¹ The waters of the lake are, in fact, only salt by being saturated from the great salt mountain of Usdum, at the south end.²

¹ Canon Tristram in *Daily Telegraph*; also fully, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, pp. 12, 380.

² Canon Tristram, noting that Engedi, had—as the former name Hazezon Tamar, implies—groves of palms in Abraham's day, and that these groves were famous even down to the Christian era, says that on breaking through the limestone incrustation at the recesses of the rocks there, he found great masses of perfect palm leaves, and even whole trees, petrified where they had stood. Clumps of date palms still flourish in the small oases on the east shore of the sea. *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 380.

The basin of the Dead Sea is in keeping in its peculiarities with the whole course of the Jordan, "The Descender," which feeds it. In sixty miles, its constant twistings make the actual length two hundred, and for the whole distance it flows far below the surface of the neighbouring country, through a mere fissure torn in the rocks by volcanic force at some remote period. Issuing from Lake Merom at a level of ninety feet above the Mediterranean, it enters the Lake of Galilee at a level of 300 feet below it, and rushes thence, in a gloomy and deep chasm, from ledge to ledge, down twenty-seven rapids till, at the Dead Sea, it is, as has been said, 1,300 feet below the Mediterranean, and 3,000 below the streets of Jerusalem.

The position of the cities of the plain has been much disputed. In the opinions of Mr. George Grove, Canon Tristram, and others, it must have been north of the Dead Sea; in the "circle" in which, afterwards, stood Jericho: but others look to the south end of the lake as the true spot. They urge that the "Vale of Siddim" is said to have been full of bitumen pits, and that though none are now found around the shallow part of the lake, masses of it rise to the surface after earthquakes,¹ as if the soil of the bottom were still largely impregnated with it. The Bedouins, indeed, who now frequent the springs and pastures on the shores, trade at Jerusalem in the salt of the lake and in the bitumen which they fish out of the waters or pick up on the shores. The fields of Sodom, moreover, were well watered and fruitful as a garden of the Lord, and Robinson tells us that a whole series of permanent brooks and streams flow into the lake at the south end, where the level surface especially favoured

¹ Canon Tristram says he gathered some very large fragments. *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 24.

irrigation. Dr. Thomson,¹ believing that the cities stood at the south end of the lake, says, that in summer the southern plateau is covered with only three feet of water and is waded across in all directions, though in winter the depth of the water is thirteen feet. He argues from this that the plateau may have been dyked off in the days of Sodom, and that its submergence at all rises only from the destruction of these dykes, with perhaps a slight subsidence of the land. He thinks, moreover, the lake was fresh till the waters overflowed the southern end; but this seems impossible when we remember that the ancient beaches, showing its former levels, stand over 300 feet above its surface.

On the other hand, Major Wilson, of the Palestine Survey, agreeing with Mr. Grove, Canon Tristram and Lieut. Conder, in thinking that the cities were to the north of the lake, writes thus:—"In Gen. xiii. 1-12, there is an interesting account of the parting of Abraham and Lot, at the camp of the former, between Bethel and Hai, now represented by Beitum and a mass of ruins called Et Tell; and in close proximity to these two places there is a hill from which a commanding view of the plain north of the Dead Sea is obtained, and on which are the foundations of a very old church, possibly marking the site of Abraham's altar. The position of Abraham's camp must, at any rate, have been in the immediate neighbourhood; and as it is hardly possible for any one to read the account without feeling that Abraham and Lot were actually looking down on Sodom and Gomorrah, when 'Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan,' it follows that those cities must have been situated on some part of the plain north of the Dead Sea and visible from the heights of Bethel."

¹ *Land and Book*, p. 632.

He adds that "the plain or 'circle' of Jordan could not have extended beyond the point where the river enters the Dead Sea," and quotes the statement that Lot journeyed east, "which would have led him far away from the southern end of the sea."¹ He accounts for the disappearance of all traces of the cities to their being gradually buried under the *débris* of the western hills, washed down by the winter torrents, so as gradually to raise the level of the lower plain till it forms "a flat expanse of half consolidated mud."² It may be added, that whether the cities were at the north or at the south end, the smoke of their destruction would be visible from the camp at Mamre, where Abraham was when the catastrophe took place—but if they were at the south, there is no depression of the hills to aid the view, whereas, there is a dip in the range towards the north end, over which the smoke would be easily visible.³ A hill, however, is still pointed out among the many summits near Hebron, as that from which Abraham looked into the deep gulf which parts the mountains of Judea from those vast, unknown, unvisited ranges, which, with their caves and wide tableland, invited the fugitives from the plain below.⁴

As to the causes of the catastrophe, opinions have been no less divided than on other points. Josephus, expressing no doubt the belief of the ancient Jews, ascribes

¹ *Biblical Educator*, vol. iii. p. 359.

² Conder, *Pal. Explor. Fund. Rep.* (1874), p. 39.

³ Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 365.

⁴ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 47. Ewald (vol. i. p. 450) thinks the cities stood at the south end of the Dead Sea and attributes their overthrow to an earthquake. The name Usdum certainly sounds like Sodom. But Canon Tristram's arguments, stated at length in *The Land of Israel*, p. 364, seem to make it certain that the doomed cities were at the north end.

it to lightning,¹ and a striking legend found in the Assyrian mounds seems to favour the idea of a terrible thunderstorm accompanied by a flood.²

An overthrow from the midst of the deep³ there came
 The fated punishment from the midst of heaven descended.
 A storm, like a plummet, the earth (overwhelmed).
 To the four winds the destroying flood burned like fire.
 The inhabitants of the cities it caused to be tormented; their
 bodies it consumed.
 Freeman and slave were equal, and the high places it felled.
 In heaven and earth like a thunderstorm it had rained; a prey
 it made.
 A place of refuge the gods hastened to, and in a throng collected.
 Its mighty (onset) they fled from, and like a garment it concealed (mankind).
 They (feared) and death (overtook them)
 Their feet and hands (it embraced)
 Their body it consumed.

On the other hand, a writer so calm and scientific as Furrer⁴ thinks that an earthquake was the especial cause. "In the vicinity of the whole region," says Fraas,⁵ also, "along the line of such a deep chasm, subterranean movements are constant, and necessarily lead to changes of the level of land and water, that is, to volcanic appearances in the widest sense of the word, which produce frightful earthquakes. Thus Tiberias was destroyed by one so lately as 1837. The Dead Sea is not volcanic in the strict sense, as is shown by the regularity of the strata of limestone, though pieces of brimstone of the size of walnuts are found on the shores at some places, and though there are strong hot springs at various

¹ *Bell. Jud.*, iv. 8, 4.

² *Records of the Past*, vol. xi. p. 117. Translated by Prof. Sayce.

³ Deep = the abyss of the firmament—the waters above it. *Sayce*.

⁴ *Schenkel's Bibel Lex.*, vol. iv. p. 155.

⁵ *Aus dem Orient* (1867), p. 78.

points on the east side, one of them, at least, smelling strongly of sulphur." But the presence of lava at many places near the Sea of Galilee, and in the Ledja; with the wild irruptions of volcanic rocks on the east side of the Jordan and of the Dead Sea itself, are enough, to show that forces lie hidden beneath, which at any time may show themselves? The Bible account is very simple and striking. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven, and overthrew them and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." This seems to imply a terrible storm of lightning and tempest; but we may well suppose that an earthquake added its terrors. Fire from above might kindle the layers of asphalt with which the plain abounded,¹ and tremblings of the ground might aid the storm-flood in overwhelming everything. There is no geological reason against believing the shallow part of the lake a result of the catastrophe, for a slight subsidence of the ground, such as often happens elsewhere, would at once submerge it. The whole district, in fact, before the terrible visitation, must have been very like that of Baku on the Caspian Sea; where numerous fissures in the earth pour out liquid bitumen, while others give off inflammable gas which burns permanently when lighted—some parts, indeed, so freely, that it is only necessary to insert a pipe in the earth, and set fire to it above, to have light and heat forthwith.² No wonder that when Abraham, in the morning after the awful night, looked towards the once smiling valley, "the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

¹ Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 25.

² Rosenmüller's *Das Morgenland*. Dillmann's *Genesis*, p. 251.

The reward of Abraham's lofty trust in God might have seemed complete, on the birth of his long-promised heir—Isaac—twenty-five years after the migration from Harraṇ; when all hope of such a blessing seemed past. But the fine gold was to be tried once more, to prove its quality beyond a question. He had gone out not knowing whither, at God's call; he had lived as a stranger in Canaan, believing the promise that it would hereafter be his inheritance, while as yet he had no child; year after year his trust had been unshaken, though realization of his hopes seemed humanly impossible. But a son had at last been given him in his old age, and had grown up to youth, in visible fulfilment of the long-delayed assurance. The ideal of faith had not, however, yet been reached; there might be something still wanting of absolute, unconditional obedience to God's will: some compliance too great to be demanded. The nations round thought nothing too sacred or beloved to keep back from their idols; was Abraham capable of equal self-sacrifice?

From the earliest ages the desire to please the Divine Being had led men to carry to extremes the institution of sacrifice, originally, in all likelihood, appointed by God Himself. From offering lambs and oxen they had gradually reasoned themselves into the hideous thought that the more precious the offering the greater its acceptableness, and had thus introduced the practice of presenting human victims. The old Accadians, or early Turanian inhabitants of Chaldea, had already adopted it, long before Abraham.¹

"In the month Sivan," says an old Accadian inscription, "from the first day to the thirtieth, an eclipse failed (and) the crops of the land were not prosperous.

¹ *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. iv. p. 25.

When the God of the air (the atmosphere) is fine, (then there is) prosperity. On the high places the son is burnt."

Another says:—

"He gave his offspring for his life
The head of his offspring for his own head;
The front of his offspring for his own front,
The breast of his offspring for his own breast."

The Canaanite races, at least those of Cushite origin, not to be behind the earlier people, had adopted from them



HUMAN SACRIFICE. FROM "L'EGYPTE—ANTIQUITÉS."

this terrible rite, and had brought it with them from the Euphrates to Palestine. To make their "children pass through the fire," "to offer up their sons and their daughters;" and "to give their firstborn for their transgressions; the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul" had become, we know not how early, a dreadful characteristic of their religion. On the altars of Ammon and Moab, of Egypt and of Phenicia, as afterwards on

those of the distant Punic settlements in Carthage and Spain, the highest expression of the spirit of sacrifice found satisfaction only in the burning alive of children by their parents. Nor was the awful custom without its dark influence even on the chosen people, as in the fate of Jephthah's daughter, the sacrifice of Saul's sons at Gibeah, and the terrible scenes in the valley of Hinnom, under the walls of Jerusalem, where, in the days of Ahaz and Manasseh, it became for a time established.¹

The final and crowning trial, which was to test whether the self-surrender of the patriarch was equal to such sacrifices as the nations around him made to their idols, came to him in his tents at Beersheba²—a camping place on the pastoral uplands of the south country, twelve hours south-west of Hebron, and thus on the extreme limits of Palestine. The two springs which attracted the patriarch to the spot, and in after ages made it the centre of a considerable population, still rise in two deep wells sunk sixty feet into the limestone rock, at 300 paces apart, and built round with stone. The top is now worn into deep ruts by the ropes used through thousands of years, for drawing the clear and delicious water, for camels, herds, and flocks, as well as for the use of man. Round the well stand stone troughs of great age, to assist in the supply of the thirsty cattle.³ The grove planted by the patriarch, not of ilex or terebinth, which never descend into these wild plains, but of the light feathery tamarisk, the first and the last

¹ 2 Kings xxiii. 10. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; xxxiii. 6.

² "The Well of the Oath." It may also be translated, "The Well of the Seven (Lambs)," but the idea is the same; for the seven lambs were the offerings to confirm, as with an oath, the agreement made. To "seventh it" was the expression for swearing an oath. *Michaelis*, vol. vi. p. 147.

³ Sepp, *Das Heilige Land*, vol. i. p. 637.

tree which the traveller sees on his passage through the desert, and thus the appropriate growth of the spot, has long since vanished, but it was from beneath its growing and delightful shade that he and Isaac set forth on their sad journey.



BEERSHEBA.

From Palmer's "Desert of the Exodus," by permission.

The scene of Abraham's trial is spoken of as "the land of Moriah," an expression which has given rise to great dispute, for the only Moriah known is the hill which Solomon afterwards consecrated as the site of the temple, and it is not elsewhere used as a name for any district round. Jerusalem, moreover, has been thought too near Beersheba to suit the description of the journey as one of three days. It has hence been thought that a spot

near Shechem, the place consecrated by the first altar Abraham raised in Canaan, is meant.¹ It is urged that there is no mention in Genesis of a Mount Moriah, and that the only place besides the present in which the name occurs is in the book of Chronicles, which is confessedly of a later date.² Of Moreh, at Shechem, on the other hand it is said that we read in Judges of the Hill of Moreh,³ that is, "the Teacher," and of its oak or oaks, under the broad shade of which Abraham first pitched his tent,⁴ and built an altar, and where he was favoured by a vision of Jehovah. In the Samaritan Pentateuch it is spelt Moriah, while the Greek version translates it "the high land," from an etymology, implying "lofty," or "exalted." Among all ancient interpreters, moreover, Mount Moriah at Jerusalem finds favour only with the Jerusalem Targum, which naturally sought to glorify the temple hill.

Yet not a few cling to the belief that this opinion is right. There, it is said, Abraham had exhibited his great deed of faith and obedience, there his only offering was presented of which we have a record, though he built various other altars. Thus, it is urged, the sacred hill where the Covenant God was afterwards to dwell, and where alone His people could present their offerings, received its consecration, already, in Abraham's time.⁵

¹ See the argument for this stated at length by Bleek, in *Studien und Kritiken* (1831). Lieut. Conder seems to favour Bleek's view. "The Temple Hill," he says, "is not visible until within a half mile of it: Gerizim is seen 'afar off' from the maritime plain, within fifty miles of Beersheba." *Pal. Explor. Fund. Rep.* (July, 1880), p. 173.

² 2 Chron. iii. 1. ³ Judges vii. 1. ⁴ Gen. xii. 6. Deut. xi. 30.

⁵ Abram. Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*. Gesenius also thinks it was Moriah, quoting Josephus, *Ant.*, i. 13, 1. He gives the etymology of Moriah, adopted by the sacred writers, as "Mori Jah," the chosen of God. Compare 2 Chron. iii. 1, which Gese-

Canon Tristram, indeed, appears to settle the question by the stubborn evidence of the distances of Gerizim, or Moreh, and Moriah, from Beersheba, respectively. "Travelling at the ordinary rate of the country," says he, "Jerusalem would just be reached on the third day (as required by this narrative) from Beersheba; to reach Nablous (Moreh) in the same time *is impossible*, at the pace of fellahin with their asses."¹

The terrible drama was permitted to continue till the proof was complete and triumphant, that the patriarch's faith was equal to any strain, and that nothing could shake his trust in the Divine word, even should it be necessary, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses it, that "God should raise up Isaac from the dead."² But, before the literal victim could be offered, the true purpose and spirit of the trial were shown, in the final and fatal act being arrested. Abraham's unconditional submission, and his readiness to complete the sacrifice, were accepted instead. Henceforth it was proved that the lonely follower of Jehovah was not behind the servants of Chemosh or Baal in self-surrender to his God. But it was also taught that, while the God of Abraham had a right to demand even such a sacrifice as that of an only son, a limit was fixed to the impulse in man to offer his costliest and best, and a sacredness stamped on human life. The highest devotion authorized was to be symbolized only by the offering of lower creatures, not of human beings; the life of the creature being regarded as accepted instead of that of the offerer. Thus, the solemn lesson was taught, no less vividly than before, that sacrifice was no mere outward act, but an awful confession

nus translates, the hill Moriah, which was pointed out to David (in a vision). *Theo.*, p. 1246.

¹ *Land of Israel*, p. 154.

² Heb. xi. 19.

of guilt and exposure to wrath, as well as an atonement or expiation. On the one hand the great principle was proclaimed that the sacrifice of self was the highest and holiest offering that God can accept; and on the other, the inhuman sacrifices, towards which the ancient ceremonial was perpetually tending, were condemned, and cast out of the true worship of the Church for ever.¹

His son given back to him, as if from the dead, the spot became memorable, not to the patriarch alone, but to all ages, as the scene of a great lesson. Henceforth the name Jehovah Jireh was given to it—the Lord will provide—but to this the sacred author appends a Jewish proverb, which illustrates, in the variety of interpretations given it, the difficulty of understanding fully the sententious expressions of remote antiquity. “In the mountain the Lord will provide,” that is, “as He had pity on Abraham, so He will have pity on us,” says Dean Stanley. “In the mountain of the Lord, He appeareth,” say Tuch and Delitzsch. “On the mountain where Jehovah appeareth, let us praise Him,” says Ewald. “On the mountain of the Lord one shall be seen as a worshipper,” says Kalisch. “On Mount Moriah God provides for men and sends them help; as He of old did to Abraham, so He does to us now,” says Gesenius.²

It is striking to notice the echoes of this great event in ancient heathenism. Among the Phenicians it was told

¹ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, p. 49. Rev. F. W. Robertson (*Notes on Genesis*, p. 55) remarks:—“Abraham lived in a country where human sacrifices were common; he lived in a day when a father's power over a son's life was absolute. He was familiar with the idea, and just as familiarity with *slavery* makes it less horrible, so familiarity with this, as an established and conscientious mode of worshipping God, removed from Abraham much of the horror we should feel.

² Ges., *Thes.*, p. 1246.

how Isiael, king of the country, having an only son, whose mother's name was Anobret, "the Hebrew Fountain," on occasion of a great national calamity, adorned him royally and sacrificed him on an altar which he had prepared.¹ Among the Greeks Agamemnon prepares to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, who, however, is delivered at the last moment by the goddess Diana providing, in her stead, a hind.²

From the scene of this great victory of trust in God, Abraham returned to his camping place at Beersheba; in after times, from being the last inhabited spot on the edge of the desert, regarded as the southern frontier of his descendants. Why he should have left Hebron is only matter for conjecture. It may have been to be nearer his flocks and herds, to which the wells of Beersheba offered the priceless advantage, in these wild regions, of abundant water. Or, can it have been that he might be nearer Ishmael, his firstborn son, thrust out from his father's home by the imperious bearing of "the princess" of the tribe; who would brook no rival to Isaac in her presence? Or was it the revival in Abraham, in his old age, of the Bedouin love of the open desert, far from the haunts of men? In any case, Beersheba continued for many years the centre of patriarchal life, for Isaac lingered near it long after his father's death,³ and Jacob returned to it after his exile.

Thirty-seven years had passed since the birth of Isaac,⁴ and Sarah had attained the great age of a hundred and twenty-seven, when death overtook her at Hebron,⁵

¹ Kenrick's *Phenicia*, p. 228.

² Euripid., *Iph. Aul.*, 783.

³ Gen. xxvi. 23.

⁴ Compare Gen. xvii. 17, and xxiii. 1. Isaac's marriage took place three years after Sarah's death, Gen. xxv. 20.

⁵ The name of Hebron is given in this passage as Kiriath Arba.

apparently while the patriarch was for the time away at Beersheba, among his flocks, perhaps little dreading such a calamity. It would seem, indeed, as if part of the tribe still remained there, Beersheba being, as it were, an outpost in the midst of the desert pastures, which Abraham occasionally visited. Nothing could be more touching in its simplicity or more true to the age, than the picture of his bearing under his new trial, and of the incident attending the burial of the dead. He comes at once to "mourn for Sarah and to weep for her," prostrating himself in his grief before the lifeless form long so dear. But the hot climate necessitated speedy interment, and he therefore "stands up from before his dead," and summons the men of the town; which it appears was a little republic, managing its affairs by representative elders; to buy from them in perpetuity, a resting-place for his wife and afterwards for himself. If, as Prof. Sayce thinks,¹ the Hittites were a branch of the Northern Kheta, we can picture to ourselves the group, who in Eastern fashion, met Abraham outside the town gate,² dressed in loose gowns like those of the Assyrians, reaching the ancles, their beards long and their hair curled. Compliments pass, in oriental style. Abraham is made welcome, as a great man, to choose any of their sepulchres;³

But Arba is the Accadian numeral, four, and as the Accadian and Babylonian gods had numerical symbols, it is thought that the god Sarru-ikder, whose number was four, may have been intended by it as applied to Hebron, which would thus mean "the city of Sarra-ikdu." The habitual concealment of the Divine name in the East, and the fact that there are various cities called Arba, seems to favour this interpretation.

¹ *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. p. 28.

² Gen. xxiii. 18.

³ An Arab gives his house, field, horse, to-day as in Abraham's time, to an intending buyer, and appeals to witnesses that he does

a gracious, though perhaps only a formal courtesy, which Abraham acknowledges, like an Arab, by bowing low. But he is too much a man of the world to leave such a matter so loosely, and in strictly Eastern fashion, which transacts even a marriage through third parties, asks their mediation with the owner for the legal purchase of the cave of Machpelah and the field in which it stood. These, in the end, he formally buys for four hundred silver shekels, duly weighed out; as money still is in China, and as it was till lately in India, to secure its being due weight,¹ and thus current with the traders of the town. All this, moreover, is done in public, before the gate, that the attestation of eye-witnesses may not be wanting; written documents not being as yet in use, in these parts, in such cases.²

The cave thus bought four thousand years ago, lies on the east edge of Hebron, where an ancient Christian church, built over it, is now turned into a mosque, which the Turks guard sacredly against any intrusion. Even the Crown Prince of Germany and our Prince of Wales could gain entrance only to the upper storey, where there is next to nothing to see; the cave lying underneath, hidden from all eyes. The mosque is a right-angled

so. But it is none the less known that this is only a form to help him to raise the price in the end. "What is that between me and thee," is still a standing phrase on such occasions, as it was 4,000 years ago.

¹ To weigh money was a Chaldean custom as well as a Canaanite. The very words are the same in Assyrian and Hebrew. Shekel=sicle=weight; as pondus=weight=pound. Rawlinson's *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, vol. ii. p. 113.

² All the men of the place gather round contracting parties at the gate of an Eastern town or village, the usual place of assembling, and take part in the transaction, finally acting as witnesses to it. A bargain thus confirmed is indisputable.

building, about 200 feet long by 115 broad, and consists, in its lower part, of gigantic marble-like bevelled stones, some of them 12 feet long and 5 feet in breadth; one, indeed, being no less than 38 feet in length. This portion is the most ancient and the finest relic of Jewish architecture, for it dates from the early Jewish ages, and remains a proof of the jealous care taken by the Hebrews of the graves of their venerated fathers.¹ The cave itself, as its name tells us, is double,² one rising over the other, divided by an artificial floor; the upper one alone being ever entered, and that only by the chief minister of the mosque, for prayer, in any time of special public calamity.

An outside stair leads up to a floor above the level of the caves, and on this are raised empty tombs, as monuments to the illustrious dead who lie far below. Each is enclosed within a separate chapel or shrine, closed with gates or railings; those of the tombs of Abraham and Sarah, of silver. The shrine of Abraham is cased in marble, and contains a so-called tomb, raised about six feet high, and hung with three carpets, embroidered with gold. The "tombs" of Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah are also shown, but are much like that of Abraham, though less rich. No men are permitted to enter the "tombs" of the women.³

Only one European, Pierroti, an Italian architect in the service of the Sultan, has ever seen more than the floor of the upper chamber, with its six tawdry erections,

¹ Furrer's *Palästina*, p. 86. *Land and Book*, p. 580.

² Machpelah = double. M. Pierroti has proved that it is really a double cave.

³ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 495. Rosen, *Die Patriarchengruft zu Hebron*, passim. Guérin, *Description de la Palestine*, vol. iii. pp. 214-256.

placed there in accordance with a practice usual in Mahometan sepulchres. Pierroti, daringly pressing after the chief Santon or priest of the mosque, when he was entering the lower storey on a special occasion, found the entry was by a horizontal door in the porch. First a carpet, then a grated iron door, was lifted; after which a narrow stair appeared, cut in the rock. Undeterred by blows and violence, he managed to descend this far enough to see into the lower cavern in a northern direction, and to notice sarcophagi of white stone; the true tombs of some of the illustrious dead, in striking corroboration of the statement of Josephus, that they were of fair marble, exquisitely wrought.¹ There can be little doubt, indeed, that the remains of the three generations of patriarchs and their wives, Rachel alone excepted, still lie safely in this their venerable sepulchre.

Abraham, now left alone, was fast becoming a very old man, for he was a hundred and thirty-seven when Sarah died; and it was all important to get a fitting wife for Isaac, that heirs to the promise, nine times confirmed by God, should not fail. Slowly but surely everything had hitherto helped on its fulfilment—the separation of the patriarch from his father's house and from idolatry; the seal of circumcision, setting him and his for ever apart from the nations around; the birth of Isaac; the sending away of Ishmael. Isaac was clearly the chosen of God, but it was all important that his future wife should be of his father's stock,² and not an idolatrous Canaanite, and no less so that he should not leave the country which God had given him as an inheritance.

¹ Pierroti, *Machpela* (Lausanne, 1869), p. 93. Jos., *Ant.*, i. 14.

² They always marry in their own tribe, not allowing any member of it to marry into another. Seetzen, *Reisen durch Syrien*, vol. iii. p. 22.

Calling therefore his head slave, the most confidential of his servants,—perhaps Eliezer—he tells him all his mind, and commissions him to set out for Mesopotamia, “Aram of the two rivers,” to the old home of the tribe, to seek a bride; but first requires him to swear an oath with a form used by Jacob long afterwards¹ and still common among Arabs, to act strictly according to his master’s commands. It seems as if Abraham had not expected to live till his return, for he gives him full power to carry out the whole matter in every detail.

Taking ten camels, for himself and those who went with him; for the necessities of the road, the gifts to be presented, and the use of the bride on the return; the trusty messenger sped forthwith on his long journey, past Damascus, then east to the Euphrates, and south to Harran, “the city of Nahor.” There, Arab like, he makes his camels kneel outside the town, beside the spring always found close to Eastern cities or encampments, and, indeed, fixing their locality; and waits, for it is towards evening, till the women and maidens come out, as they still do, to draw water overnight for their household needs.

Devout, as became the servant of such a master, he commits the whole matter to God, praying that the courtesy of the appointed damsel might be the providential hint to guide him. Presently the daughters and the wives of the town gather round the well, and among them a maiden fair to look on—her pitcher on her shoulder—as was still long afterwards the custom with the Hebrews, and as is universal with Arab women still. A

¹ Gen. xlvii. 29. The meaning of this form has been much discussed, but the best explanation seems to be that it had reference to an implied responsibility to posterity for the fulfilment of the oath. Buxtorf’s *Lex. Tal.*, p. 680.

friendly request for some water receives her kindly answer, and even an offer to draw water for the camels as well; for the daughters even of sheiks were wont to do this office for their father's flocks and beasts, as in the case of Jethro's daughters in Midian. The sign that had been asked seems granted; the appointed one must be before him. Taking a golden nose-ring and two golden armlets, he puts them on her, in acknowledgment of her politeness, asking her parentage, and whether he can lodge at her father's. Then comes the intimation that she is Nahor's grand-daughter, and, thus, directly of Abraham's kindred, and with this, the assurances of entertainment as wished, for both himself and his camels. Hastening home to the women's part of the house, she shows the golden gifts and tells the story, in the hearing of her brother Laban. Always keen and grasping, the sight of gold quickens his hospitality, and running to the well, he presses the stranger to return with him. He had prepared the house, he said, and made room in the yard for the camels.

The great beasts ungirded, fed, and littered, water is provided for the washing of the stranger's feet and those of his men—a first duty of hospitality, where, sandals only being worn, the heat and dust make such refreshment unspeakably grateful. Food is then set before him. But he cannot taste it till his errand is told. From politeness he had not been asked either respecting himself or his master. Now, however, he repeats all that Abraham had said to him, word by word, adding that the damsel who had acted so courteously to him at the well was assuredly the bride intended by God for Isaac, and concluding by a direct and business-like request to know whether he might have her for him. Rebekah herself is not consulted, for, in the East, the consent of the maiden

is never sought; her marriage is settled by others for her. Father and mother must agree to the betrothal, but it is also necessary that Laban sanction it;¹ for daughters cannot be married among Arab tribes, even now, except with the approval of their brothers, and Laban was not the man to stand back in a matter involving money. Bethuel, the father, keeps in the background, therefore, throughout, leaving his eager pushing son to settle the matter; but both parents forthwith give a ready consent to the match. "Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." The whole transaction was thus settled within perhaps an hour of the arrival at Harran. The sight of the ten camels, and of the golden presents for so slight a courtesy as Rebekah had shown, were arguments too strong to admit of hesitation in the answer.

Thanking God once more, with lowly prostration on the earth, nothing now remained but to seal the betrothal by the customary gifts to the bride elect, and by paying the purchase price for her to her brother and mother. Forthwith, therefore, gold and silver ornaments, so dear to maidens, and costly clothes, are brought out and handed to Rebekah, as from her future husband; for such gifts were demanded by custom from bridegrooms on their betrothal, to make the agreement binding. To Laban and his mother equally precious gifts are also presented, as the price paid for the maiden, and all is arranged without Rebekah being consulted. Nothing remains but to take her to her future distant home.

Eager to carry back the news of his success, the faith-

¹ Gen. xxxiv. 11. When the father lived in polygamy, full brothers had great authority in reference to their full sisters; more even than their father. The case of Dinah at Shechem further illustrates this. Michaelis, *Mos. Recht*, vol. ii. p. 98.

ful envoy next morning presses for leave to set out on his return. But the whole matter is only a few hours old; will he not stay a few days, to let the bride bid farewell to her father's house? It is left to Rebekah herself to decide; and she, cold and strong-willed, eager to enter on the new life which glittered before her, only too readily agrees to leave at once. An Arab wife has no outfit, for her husband provides all she needs, and so she mounts her camel forthwith, and leaves her father's house for ever, with the stranger whom she had first met only overnight. Yet she must start in a way befitting the daughter of a wealthy sheik. Her nurse, still an Arab woman's companion and cherished friend, must go with her, and she must take some slave-girls also, as her dowry. Thus accompanied, the camel specially brought from Beersheba for her use, and doubtless provided with a bridal throne in gaudy Eastern fashion, bears her off; and she moves away amidst good wishes, culminating in the dearest to an Eastern woman's heart, that she may be the mother of countless descendants, who should hold the gates—that is, the towns—of their vanquished enemies.

Isaac, now forty years of age, always gentle, had apparently remained unmarried till now, to please his mother, with whom he had lived till her death. Still feeling her loss, over three years before, he had gone out to the open downs near his father's tents, in the cool evening; perhaps in a meditative mood, perhaps only to look after his men and his flocks. It was in the neighbourhood of the spring, called, long years before, by Hagar, Lahai roi, "the Spring of the Living One who sees me,"¹ for a camp was always, as I have said, near a supply of water. Suddenly Rebekah appears in the distance, and as she comes near, alights from her camel on seeing a man,

¹ Gen. xvi. 14.

as custom still demands in the East, to do him reverence. But the stranger is no other than Isaac, and she veils her face as she learns the fact ; for the husband must not see his bride till they are finally alone. The servant's story reveals the rest, and the tent of Sarah, now long without a mistress, receives a new one ; Isaac's wife.

From the marriage of Abraham with Keturah in his old age, there sprang, we are told, six sons, who became the fathers of as many Arab tribes. But, like Ishmael, these possible rivals of Isaac were not allowed to remain with the heir of the great promise ; receiving gifts from their father, they were sent away to the open lands which invited them on the east. No more is recorded of the patriarch but his death, and his burial beside Sarah in the cave of Machpelah ; Isaac and his peaceful shepherds, joining with Ishmael, and his warlike followers from the desert, after long separation, as chief mourners, both equally honouring their common father.

Abraham's character merits the tribute paid it in all ages. Its strength is seen in the choice of Jehovah as his God when all around were idolators, and in his grand loyalty to Him amidst every temptation. Neither disappointment, nor delay, nor the strain of the sternest demands, for a moment shook his faith. Knowing Him in whom he believed, he trusted Him with an immovable confidence. Nor was his bearing less worthy towards his fellow men. Though the elder, he gives the choice to Lot when the two must part ; willing, for peace and kindness, to take contentedly what his nephew leaves. He is too magnanimous to claim the spoil which war had made his, after the defeat of the kings, but renders the great service freely, without reward. If Hagar and Ishmael live ill at ease with Sarah, they have no such feeling towards him ; for they knew how unwilling he had been

to send them away, and must have seen how the heart clung to them, which broke out in the fatherly prayer, "O that Ishmael might live before thee." The pity even for the unworthy that marks his intercession for Sodom is a lesson for every age. His bearing to the three mysterious strangers under the oaks of Mamre is the ideal of patriarchal courtesy and hospitality. He runs to meet them, and bowing low, begs them to let him entertain them, and himself hastens the meal.¹ That he should have maintained relations so friendly with the races among whom he lived at Shechem, Bethel, and Hebron, speaks for his prudence, integrity, and neighbourly worth. No wonder that his descendants, regarding him at once in his relations to God and to his fellow men, should speak of him as "incomparable in his generation," or that they have fabled of him, that, in Jeremiah's day, when the temple had been destroyed, Abraham's form was seen over the ruins, his hands uplifted, pleading with God for the sons of his people led off to captivity.²

¹ Each part in this picture is true to Arab life. The washing of the feet is the first act of politeness shown to guests, and indeed was so even in ancient Greek life (*Odyss.*, vi. 207), and is still so among the Hindoos. Bread is prepared each day by fire on a rock till it is heated enough to bake in a few minutes the thin cakes in use, or on an iron plate, or on a fire of wood or dried camel's dung. The greatest sheik thinks it no dishonour himself to run to the herd for a lamb for his guests, and to kill it with his own hands, while his wife is kindling the fire and preparing to make the meal ready. As to the quickness with which the slain calf was cooked, Arabs and all eastern peoples constantly cook the creatures they have killed for food, immediately after death; the hot climate requiring this. See Rosenmüller's *A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 71. Hanna, in *Bib. Educator*, vol. i. p. 42. *Vigouroux*, vol. i. p. 437. *Land and Book*, p. 446.

² Beer's *Leben Abraham*, p. 88.



CHAPTER XXIII.

ISAAC AND HIS SONS.

IT is strange to think what a great part the descendants of the Chaldean shepherd, Terah, have played in the history of the world. Those of Nahor gradually formed a great kingdom which only passed away before the rising power of Syria and the fierce attacks of Edom.¹ The twelve tribes, sprung from Ishmael, scattered themselves over the vast pasture and desert regions of Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, the shores of the Persian Gulf, and the east of the Jordan. The sons of Keturah, in the same way, grew into similar tribes, to whom the desert solitudes have ever since been the chosen home. The Arab race, indeed, over the world, are the posterity of Nahor and Abraham. Nor have they been without their great part on the stage of the world, for it is to an Arab that more than 200,000,000 of men look to-day as the great prophet of God, and the empire they founded in the first days of Mahometanism stretched from India to the Straits of Gibraltar, and by its culture and civilization prepared the way for the revival of Letters in Western Europe.

But the supreme interest of mankind centres in the Hebrew, not in the Arab descendants of Abraham.

¹ *Ewald*, vol. i. p. 445.

Isaac, his heir, is at once a counterpart of his great father in simple devoutness and purity of life, and a contrast in his passive weakness of character; which, in part at least, may have sprung from his relations to his mother and wife. After the expulsion of Ishmael and Hagar, Isaac had no competitor, and grew up in the shade of Sarah's tent, moulded into feminine softness by habitual submission to her strong loving will. It is quite in keeping with such a history that Isaac mourned her for years after her death, and was diverted from his grief only by his marriage. No sorrow in the East is greater than that of a son for his mother, and Isaac, an only child, clung to his with all the tenderness of a soft and dependent nature.

The choice of Rebekah as his wife was dictated at once by the desire of the Arab race to keep the blood of their tribe pure, and by Abraham's determination to separate his posterity, as the chosen people of God, from the idolatrous Canaanites. But she can hardly be regarded as an amiable woman. When we first see her she is ready to leave her father's house for ever at an hour's notice, and her future life showed not only a full share of her brother's duplicity, but the grave fault of partiality in her relations to her children, and a strong will which soon controlled the gentler nature of her husband. Married at the age of forty, Isaac presently surrendered himself to her influence, as he had hitherto done to that of his parents. Her name, "The Enchainers,"¹ may indeed, have been a tribute to her charms, but it equally expressed her relations to her husband. Wholly devoted to her, in an age when Abraham and Jacob alike had concubines, and notwithstanding her childlessness for

¹ Literally, "the noosed cord," *i.e.*, the mancatcher.

twenty years, the pair have always been the Hebrew ideal of chaste married life.

No career could have been more uneventful than Isaac's; but it shows at least, that a path of modest retirement may honour God as much as one of prominent action. So quiet and unenergetic, that his whole life was spent in the circle of a few miles; so guileless, that he lets Jacob overreach him rather than disbelieve his assurance; so tender, that his mother's death was the poignant sorrow of years, and that in his blind old age he must have Esau kiss him when he came near; so patient and gentle, that peace with his neighbours was dearer than even such a coveted possession as a well of living water dug by his own men; so grandly obedient, that he put his life at his father's disposal; so firm in his reliance on God, that his greatest concern through life was to honour the Divine promise given to his race; so devout in his unwavering loyalty to the faith of Abraham—it is easy to understand why even our Lord's authority is vouchsafed for his having passed from earth to heaven at his death.

Of Ishmael, his half-brother, little is told us. From his childhood till he was a grown lad he had been regarded as the future chief of his father's tribe. The pride and delight of Abraham, who was over eighty when this his first son was born, he doubtless had been caressed and flattered by old and young. But the birth of Isaac had in a moment disinherited him, and left both him and his mother once more the mere personal slaves of Sarah, now their bitter enemy. That Hagar had lost her head at her elevation as the mother of Abraham's only son, was natural; and doubtless she fancied herself far above the childless Sarah in his regards; but to both, the change must have been terrible when banished from the encampment. Nor was there anything to soften the

blow. Keturah's sons, at a later time, were sent off with a gift of flocks and herds, but Ishmael and his mother had no more than a skin of water and some bread.

Hard as it must have been to Abraham thus to send away his first-born, it must have been harder still for both mother and son to be thus turned adrift in the desert, to make their way to some friendly tents; and it is no wonder that the remembrance of their sufferings, before they found such a refuge, glowed in the heart of the lad. Embittered at the insult to his mother, and at his own wrongs, he henceforth proudly cast off all relations to his father's tribe, and from the heir expectant of a quiet pastoral encampment, grew up into the mere wandering Arab, relying on his bow and spear, his hand against every man and every man's hand against him.

Circumstances, indeed, made this natural. The open sweep of the desert fanned the love of its wild freedom into a passion; forced him to depend on the chase for his living; exposed him to danger from hostile tribes and from beasts of prey; and the dull sense of wrong, withal, kept him aloof from mankind, except when he swooped down on the passing caravan, or the unsuspecting encampment, for plunder.

Yet the simple shepherd life amidst which he had grown up, must have been early adopted by him and his people in a measure; for we find the Hazeroth, or "circles" formed by the tents of a tribe round its flocks, among the characteristics of his family.¹ But he had little taste for a peaceful life. As in Esau's case, the wilder side of Arab nature was strongest in him, and his bent must always have been towards stir and adventure rather than quiet and unexciting employments. In boyhood and

¹ Gen. xxv. 16. The word is wrongly translated "towns."

early youth the darling of Abraham, he had become self-willed and impatient of restraint. High spirited and fond of listening at the watchfires of his father's herdsmen, to their stories of feuds and encounters with hostile neighbours at the wells, or with the freebooters of the desert; he had early become enamoured of the excitement of border life on the open wastes. The chase of the gazelle or the wild goat, and the more dangerous pursuit of the bear or the leopard, had doubtless in early youth inured him to exertion and adventure, and the taste for it clung to him through life. His aptest emblem was to be the wild ass of the desert,¹ that no man can tame and that scorns the multitude of the city,² and delights in the far off pastures of the wilderness.

Of his future history little is told. To separate him finally from Abraham's tribe, Hagar sought out for him an Egyptian wife; a countrywoman, therefore, of her own. As the great emir's son he would doubtless be received with consideration by the tribe he joined, and would soon find himself at the head of retainers of his own. Tradition speaks of his having married a daughter of the sheik of his new encampment; and the desert was already the home of many bands of nomades, with some of whom he no doubt formed alliances.³

When Abraham died Ishmael was a man of nearly ninety and had long been a great desert chief. He reappears for a moment, and only once, at the patriarch's burial, at which Isaac and he met once more. It must have been a striking scene when the two brothers, so long separated, united to pay the last honours to one equally dear to both, and showed in their doing so their high sense of his worth. Isaac, with his hundreds of household

¹ Gen. xvi. 12. The angel says he will be "a wild ass man."

² Job xxxix. 7.

³ Gen. x. 25-30,

slaves ; Ishmael, with his troops of wild retainers and half savage allies, in all the state of a Bedouin prince, gathered before the cave of Machpelah, in the midst of the men of Heth, to pay the last duties to the Father of the Faithful, would make a notable subject for an artist.

A few isolated notices sum up all that is known, besides, of this strange wild figure of old times. Sons and daughters, born from different wives, grew into great clans, and even into powerful states ; like that of the Nabathæans, who, four centuries before Christ, made Petra the capital of a wide kingdom ; and that of the Ituræans, who, hereafter, were to dispute with Moses, on the east of the Jordan, for the possession of the Hauran. A strange fate linked the fortunes of Esau, the outcast of Isaac's household, with those of Ishmael, the outcast from that of Abraham, in the marriage of the future father of the Edomites with Mahalath, "the lyre," Ishmael's daughter, to humour Isaac and Rebekah's wish for marriage into the same stock. Ishmael was then an old man of a hundred and fourteen, but he lived twenty-three years more. We hear nothing more of him, however, than that, at last, he wandered farther east than any of the encampments of his sons or daughters.¹ The Ishmaelites, indeed, gradually spread from the Red Sea to the Euphrates.² Over these wide desert spaces

¹ The phrase "he died in the presence of all his brethren" (Gen. xxv. 18) should rather be as in the text. Naphal, "to fall," "to die," translated "died," means also to "set oneself down," "to dwell." The word translated "before," means here, and in Gen. xxiii. 17, "to the east." In Deut. xxxii. 49, the same phrase is translated "over against," but it should be "east of."

² *Ant.*, i. 12, 4. Genesis describes the limits of the Ishmaelites, as extending in open villages and encampments (translated "towns and castles," ver. 16) from Havilah, apparently on the African coast, as far south as Bab el Mandeb, to Shur, east

they have roamed, the same in every age. "No one of them," says Ammianus Marcellinus, writing in the fourth century of our era, "ever lays hold of a plough, or plants a tree, or seeks food from tilling the soil. They wander continually, roaming through wide tracts, without a home, without fixed dwellings, without laws. Nor do they ever stay long under the same sky, or rest satisfied long with any district. Their life is spent in constant movement."

Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, born twenty years after the marriage of their parents, when Isaac was sixty, present a striking contrast, alike in character and ultimate fortune. Esau is frank and generous; Jacob, crafty and mean. Freehanded, light-hearted, and careless, the shaggy energetic hunter shows off for a time to far greater advantage than the plodding, quiet, astute dweller in tents.

But a closer study of the whole lives of the two does not support this earlier estimate. In Jacob, we have a struggle against baser elements of character, gradually resulting in the triumph of the nobler; in Esau, the original good darkens, as he grows older, into overmastering evil. Nothing seems to be wanting to depreciate Jacob. He outwits his brother, deceives his father, and seems to make a bargain even in his prayer. He is more than a match for Laban in craft, and returns Esau's impulsive friendship, when they meet, with cautious distrust. At Shechem, he thinks only of the possible injury to himself that may follow the treachery of his sons, and is silent as to their crime; and even when on the point of going to Joseph, he is suspicious and wary to the last.

Yet, with all these abatements, his life, seen as a whole, of (not *before*) Egypt, in the direction of Assyria; that is, in Northern or Stony Arabia, including Petra. Gen. xxv. 18.

stands in a far higher light than that of his brother. If Esau arrest our interest at first, with his wild rough spirit, the type of a man of the field—his bow, his arrows and his spear his delight—hastening to chase the antelope at his father's desire, and bring home venison for his pleasure; if we cannot but sympathise with him in his "great and exceeding bitter cry," "Bless me, even me also, O my father," on finding himself over-reached; the solid qualities which command permanent esteem are nevertheless wanting. He has no depth of nature, lives for the moment, cares nothing for higher interests, has no aim but the present satisfaction of his pleasures or bodily wants, and if capable of generous impulses is no less so of plans of deepseated revenge. Open, manly, and even at times magnanimous,—with all the elements, in fact, that might have ripened into a splendid character,—the want of solid qualities changes him gradually into a mere Bedouin chief, living by war and plunder. The race of Edom which sprang from him—fickle, turbulent, false and unruly, embodies only too fully his worse characteristics. Their homes in the strong defiles of Seir, a fitting seat for attacking their neighbours, or for defence from their hatred, are themselves, when contrasted with Jacob's tents in the open country, striking commentaries on the respective tendencies of the two brothers.

In Jacob, on the other hand, we see the best as well as the worst qualities of his race. If the earlier half of his life shows much that is unworthy, even through it there runs that thoughtful foresight and steadfast pursuit of a great aim which alone secure lasting and noble results. In his sin against Esau and his father in regard to the birthright, he seeks a high end by ignoble means; he does evil that good may come. Its supreme worth, as carrying with it the inheritance of the Divine

promise, was little esteemed by Esau. "He did eat and drink, and rose up and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright." A short delay, at most, would have secured him food in his father's tents, without any sacrifice;¹ but to satisfy his hunger on the moment was more to a mind so light than any good even a little way off. To Jacob, on the other hand, to transmit the promise to his posterity, as the chosen race, was above all things precious. Disdaining useful work, Esau chose the busy idleness of life in the desert; but Jacob, during long years, was content to toil on patiently with settled purpose. Through prosperity and adversity; in distant exile and after his return; through years of sorrow and in his peaceful decline, the steadfast aim of his life never wavered. Nor did he show a less noble tenacity in other directions. The love which sprang up at his first meeting with Rachel at Laban's well made the seven years of hard service by which he had won her seem but a few days; and long after he had buried her on the way to Bethlehem, she was on his lips, in his dying words to her grandchildren.² His mother's nurse, whom she had brought with her from Harran, drew, in her declining years, to Jacob rather than Esau, and the grief he felt at the loss of such a link to the past was seen in the tree beneath which he laid her being henceforth known as "the oak of weeping."³ Towards Joseph and Benjamin, Rachel's children, his relations were equally tender, for the very thought of their loss seemed as if it would "bring his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave."

Nor was there less at least of ultimate worth in the

¹ The pottage coveted by Esau was of lentils, a species of vetch. The red lentil is considered the best. It is generally used as pottage even now. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 462.

² Gen. xlviii. 7.

³ Gen xxxv. 8.

higher aspects of his character. When he started from Bethel for Mesopotamia, his religion was still mingled with too much human contrivance; but he becomes a different man as he grows older. The struggles and trials of many years brought out what was best in him, and softened and melted away much that was ignoble and doubtful. We see him at his best, after the mysterious inward struggle in the night at Peniel; when "he wept and made supplication," "and had power over the angel and prevailed." Till then he had shown too much reliance on human craft, even while true to his faith in the promises; but trouble was gradually transforming him from Jacob, "the supplanter," to Israel, "the Prince of God." His prayer in anticipation of the meeting with Esau, with its touching confession that he was not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth shown him, breathes a very different spirit from that with which he left Canaan long years before; and this contrite humility presently won its final triumph in the mysterious scene at the ford of the Jabbok; a name meaning "the wrestler." Purified and proved by trial, the higher qualities of his nature, for the most part, shine out more and more, till it is felt to be in perfect keeping with his later life that he alone of the patriarchs, as a ripened saint, leaves a solemn prophetic blessing to his children as he dies.

In their boyhood the two lads had enjoyed the privilege of having their grandfather Abraham with them, for he survived till they were about fifteen. But neither of them reproduced his grand characteristics. The first forty years of their life developed two very different men. Esau was clearly reverting to a lower grade of civilization—that of the wandering Bedouin; Jacob slowly advancing from the life of a shepherd to that of a tiller

of the ground. Isaac, little inclined to moving about, had added agriculture to the care of flocks. Broad fields and abundant harvests became familiar sights at Gerar and Beersheba, and quickened a love for the soil in Jacob, which he afterwards showed in his fields at Shechem,¹ and transmitted to his posterity. With the one exception of a proposal from a neighbouring petty king to take Rebekah into his harem, little could have disturbed these tranquil years. Strifes about wells were apparently the only break in the quiet; for the Philistines, envious of Isaac's prosperity, and perhaps half afraid of his many retainers, once and again disputed his possession of the wells he had sunk with great labour through the limestone rock. They had already taken the common Oriental course for driving away unwelcome or hostile neighbours, of filling with earth those dug by Abraham; but nothing could ruffle the even spirit of the peace-loving Isaac. To hew out a well in the desert pastures, was a great thing, in which even the chiefs were proud to join. Its successful termination inspired the poets of the tribe, and caused universal rejoicings. "Spring up, ye springs," says a snatch of an old popular song of Israel, of the time of the wilderness wanderings,² "springs which princes dug—which the nobles of the people hewed out, with the ruler's staff and their sceptre." King Uzziah was famous for his many wells, and doubtless Isaac was no less so in his day. Fierce and desperate feuds doubtless sprang up from time to time when possessions so precious were assailed; but Isaac, timid and gentle, only moved to other pastures and sank other wells. In these disputes we can well imagine Esau taking part; but Jacob, like his father, would be more likely to think quiet cheaply bought by yielding.

Gen. xxxvii. 7. ² Num. xxi. 17. See Ewald, *Gesch.*, vol. ii. p. 287.

The marriages of the patriarchal families decided the history of their subsequent branches. Quiet progress from households of shepherds to a settled nation turned necessarily on the life adopted, and that again was largely affected by the domestic alliances made. The daughter of Bethuel, coming from "the city" of Nahor, must have brought with her the instincts of a settled life, and so, also, with the daughters of Laban, Bethuel's son. But what instincts could grow up in the children of Ishmael or Esau, except those of the wild, unimproving Arab; born as they were of idolatrous mothers, wherever the wandering camp of their parents chanced for the time to be pitched. It was a Divine impulse, therefore, which, acting through the Eastern craving for unmixed blood, led to the choice of brides, for Isaac and Jacob, from the old home of the race. Esau's leanings were only too plain in his bringing home two Hittite maidens as wives.¹ It was clear that the traditions of Abraham and Isaac had no hold on him, and that their worship of the One only God, to whom he himself had been dedicated by circumcision, was nothing in his eyes. To build up a chosen race, the heirs of the Divine covenant, involved strict separation from the heathen around; but Esau, with this knowledge, had deliberately forsaken his own race, with all its hopes and aspirations, and identified himself with those from

¹ Isaac and Esau both married at the age of forty, and the connection of Jacob's being sent off to Mesopotamia for a wife, with the statement of the grief of both parents at Esau's alliances, points to both events happening near each other in time. Moreover, chap. xxviii. 9 assumes that Ishmael was alive when Jacob was sent off. But he was 114 years old when Esau married, and lived in all 137 years, so that he died when Jacob was sixty-three or sixty-four. Jacob must therefore have gone to Mesopotamia long before, and was probably just over forty when he did so. See art. Jakob, in *Rehm*. So, also, Michaelis, in *Mosaisches Recht*.

whom God had required them to keep themselves distinct. No wonder that it was "bitterness of heart" to both Isaac and Rebekah, to see him thus break away from all they counted most sacred, and despise his birthright by slighting the conditions which God had imposed for its inheritance.

In this light the eagerness of Rebekah to secure for her favourite Jacob the blessing so utterly disregarded by his brother, is more easily understood, though no excuse can be offered for the treacherous and selfish means by which it was obtained; means sorely punished by the course of his future life, for Rebekah never saw Jacob again after his exile, and Jacob had to toil for over twenty years, far from home, so dear to an Oriental, instead of sharing the ease and wealth of his father's tents. But craft and deceit are natural to the Arab, and Laban's character shows that in this, Rebekah's family was no exception. Nor is it to be overlooked that Jacob makes no afterclaim for the birthright on the ground of his transaction with Esau, whose withdrawal to the desert, long before his father's death, of itself left him the headship of the race.¹

¹ The hair of Syrian goats is in some parts of the creature so fine that it was used by the Romans as a substitute for human hair.* The expression "he smelled the smell of his raiment" (xxvii. 27) is illustrated by the customs of India at the present day. "It is not common to salute," says Roberts, "they simply smell each other." Of an amiable man it is said, "How sweet is the smell of that man!" So, a lady wishing to show love to a child, in Asia Minor, still says, "Come hither, darling, and let me smell thee." Eastern garments are very often highly perfumed. Rosenmüller's *A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 122.

The "dew of heaven" (xxvii. 28) is essential to the harvest in Palestine after the rains have ceased. If it fail, there is no crop; if it be abundant, the crops are heavy.

* *Martial*, xii. 46. *Tuch*, on v. 16.

Esau's defection alone would have demanded a careful marriage for Jacob, and the necessity for flight gave the desired opportunity to secure it. Jacob must go to Mesopotamia, to the old home of the race, to seek there a wife of the pure blood. That he would be welcomed was a matter of course, for it is still the rule among Arabs that a cousin, as one of themselves, has the first claim in marriage.¹ Receiving, therefore, a parting blessing from Isaac, involving the transmission of the great promise to Abraham, he sets out on his long journey, and on the second or third night reaches the heights over which the track lay to the north, along the backbone of the Palestine hills. Taking for a pillow one of the many stones which lie around, amidst sheets of bare rock, and sinking into the sleep of the weary, the thoughts which had engaged him by day, took shape in a vision.² The great stones on all sides build themselves up into a vast staircase, lost in the heights of the open sky, and on this angels are seen ascending and descending. It was clear that other spots than Beersheba were under heavenly protection, and that, little as he had thought it, he was the object of loving interest to the messengers of God. Still more, the Divine voice sounds from the light in which the vision seemed to lose itself above, assuring the houseless wanderer that the promise given to Abraham would be fulfilled to himself, since he felt its value, and that wherever he went God would protect him, and in due time restore him to the land he was leaving. No wonder if on waking he felt, that though he had hitherto

¹ Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 215.

² The words "God who answered me in my distress," spoken long afterwards (chap. xxxv. 3) in reference to this incident, seem to imply earnest prayer as marking it.

³ Angels were not yet imagined as having wings.

thought of God as specially present at the altar-sanctuary of Beersheba, He was no less present even here. To the wanderer the spot was henceforth "BETHEL, the House of God," and "The gate of Heaven."¹

Abraham and Isaac had built altars to commemorate Divine appearances, but Jacob had to content himself with setting up the stone on which his head had rested, as a memorial; some of the oil he carried with him as food, serving as the symbol of an offering to anoint it. In all ages the earliest approaches to a "House of God," whether in eastern or western lands, have been equally rude. Similar stone memorials had already, from the remotest times, abounded in Canaan and the countries round it. The one now raised by Jacob in the centre of the land, was hence in keeping with a well known practice, and made the spot so specially holy, that Canaanite and Hebrew, alike, afterwards fought for its possession through centuries.² A second and more permanent memorial, in the pillar raised by him on his return from Mesopotamia,³ long after, and consecrated not only by anointing, but by his pouring a drink offering over it, showed the intense impression left on his mind by the vision; an impression which re-appears even in his dying blessing on Joseph, in which he can think of God only as the "Shepherd of the stone of Israel."⁴ Nor are echoes of Bethel wanting from a wider circle than Israel, for the Phenicians gave a god, once highly honoured by them on this very

¹ See a striking passage in Herder's *Ebräische Poesie*, vol. ii. p. 21. Jacob's vow to pay God a tenth of all that God might give him (ver. 22) was the ground of the gift of the tenths to the Levites as God's representatives. *Michaelis*, vol. iii. p. 22.; iv. p. 96. Jacob himself only imitated Abraham. See p. 383.

² Josh. xii. 16. Judg. i. 22.

³ Gen. xxxv. 14.

⁴ Gen. xlix. 24.

spot, the name of Batulos, while the sacred stones worn in their "charms," bore the name of Batulia.¹ Sacred stones known by that name, were, indeed, worshipped also in Phrygia, Syria, on the Euphrates, and in Egypt; while a rude stone, older than any temple, was anointed with oil by pilgrims at the ancient Delphi, and the Mahometan world to this day reveres the black stone of the Caaba, at Mecca, as a relic of Abraham and Ishmael.² The incident doubtless marks the beginning of a great revolution in the patriarch's spiritual life. That all his craft in overreaching Esau had ended, so far, only in lonely exile, when remembered in connection with the heavenly vision, must have made him feel that crooked ways had no sanction from God, even when used for good ends; and that he must henceforth follow a higher course. In his future intercourse with Laban, indeed, he opposes craft with craft, but only when forced, after long and faithful service, to defend himself and his household from cunning which sought to undo him. It is no longer his choice, but his necessity.

Strengthened to abiding trust in the Promise renewed to Him by the Divine voice itself, and by the assurance that angels were near Him, fugitive and wanderer as He was, to promote its fulfilment and to watch and guard him, Jacob "lifted up his feet," and at last came to the land of "the Sons of the East." What follows is a charming idyll. Resting by a well in

¹ Ewald, *Alth.*, p. 159.

² Sir W. Muir's *Mahomet*, p. 14. The Scotch coronation stone, now in Westminster Abbey, was held in a similar way to be Jacob's pillow.

³ It is often spoken of as "Padan" (the yoke, or hollow between two ranges of hills) of "Aram." Ewald, vol. i. p. 461. Col. Chesney describes the landscape of Harran as shut in by a low range of

the district whence his forefathers had come,³ he learns from some shepherds gathered around it, that he is close to the encampment of his uncle Laban, and that Rachel, his cousin, will soon come to water her father's flock. Erelong she appears, leading her sheep; for, then, as now, it was the custom for the unmarried daughters of chiefs to take the flocks to pasture and to water. But to see is to love; at once, and for life. Rolling aside the stone which covers the well¹ Jacob takes her toil on himself. His strength and goodwill are hers, till at last, the work done, his emotion breaks out uncontrollably, and, with the privilege of a relation, he falls on her neck and kisses her; weeping for very joy, like a true Oriental, as he tells her he is Jacob, her cousin, the son of Rebekah. Even Laban, cold and hard as he was, is

limestone hills which runs to it from Oorfa. The plain is threaded with beds of ancient irrigating canals, drawn from the river Belik. The archways and towers of the ancient castle noticed already (p. 317) are still perfect, and the old city can still be traced underneath; its streets, laid out at right angles, and the wreck of marble and porphyry pillars lying round. But this relates to an indefinitely later age than that of Jacob. Things, then, would be more aptly illustrated, perhaps, by the tents of the Arabs in the neighbourhood, and by their beehive-shaped stone huts, the roof self-supporting. *Expedition to the Euphrates*, p. 433.

¹ Wells are still the spots where the youth and girls of Bedouin life congregate, and at the wells alone is Oriental courtship carried on to this day. The Syrian girl, especially if a Druse or a Christian, unlike the secluded daughter of the towns, is frequently entrusted with the care of her father's flock. The well, the most precious of possessions, is carefully closed with a heavy slab until all those whose flocks are entitled to share its water have gathered. The time is noon. The first comers gather and report the gossip of the tribe. The story of Jacob and Rachel is, in its most minute details, a transcript of the Arab life of to-day. *Tristram's Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 142.

touched by the story, and running to greet his sister's son, leads him home with tender embraces, and long and repeated kissing,¹ making him welcome as "his bone and his flesh."

A month's stay showed that the value of Jacob's skill and industry as a shepherd made it desirable to retain him. But now begins the long record of Laban's selfish and crafty greed. "Why should Jacob, though a brother, serve for nothing? To a brother one gives rather more than less." The answer was ready. Could he only have Rachel, his love at first sight, he would gladly work seven years to get her; a proposal as gladly accepted, for was he not a tribesman and a cousin; and so the long week of years, spent in her presence, "seemed but a few days for the love he had to her."

For the double marriage which followed, Jacob can hardly be blamed, for he was tricked into it, and indeed the custom alleged is still strictly followed in India,² though it was forbidden to the Hebrews.³ Marriage with cousins was not, however, prohibited to them, though even in Jacob's day, such unions as that of Abraham with his half sister Sarah, or of Nahor with his niece Milcah, which continued common among Canaanites, Arabs, Egyptians,⁴ Assyrians, and later among the Persians, had apparently ceased in Israel, when the growth of the nation offered a wider selection. In the Mosaic law such marriages were strictly forbidden.⁵

¹ The Hebrew verb is in the conjugation Piel, which has this force.

² *Rosenmüller*, vol. i. p. 138. The Book of Jubilees, Cap. xviii. proposes this even for a law in Israel.

³ Lev. xviii. 18.

⁴ Ebers' *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 159.

⁵ Lev. xviii. 9, 11; xx. 17. Deut. xxvii. 22.

The dull and weak eyes of Leah were a poor exchange for Rachel, for she was finely made and had the splendid gazelle-like eyes so dear to an Oriental.¹ But Eastern brides come to their husbands veiled, and the substitution of one sister for another was easy. A second long week of years must be served for Rachel, though he might take her as his wife forthwith.² "Keep the week's wedding feast for Rachel, as you have done for Leah, and you may have her, if you serve seven years after, in payment." Rebekah had received several slaves as her dowry, but Laban, ever mean as he was shifty, gives Leah and Rachel only one apiece.³

A double marriage is seldom happy, but the trick by which Jacob had been forced into this one added a special trouble, in the inevitable partiality for the one sister, and apparent neglect of the other. Leah's numerous family, however, and Rachel's childlessness, must have seemed, even to Jacob, the rebuke of Providence for his different treatment of the two, though it served only as a partial solace to Leah's wounded spirit. Nothing, indeed, could be more touching than the dismal rivalry between the sisters, nor could any commentary more telling be found against the practice of polygamy. The names

¹ This is the sense of Gen. xxix. 17.

² He received Rachel for the work he *was* to serve (xxix. 27).

³ Daughters seldom had any inheritance, though this was not always the case, as we see in the daughters of Zelophehad. Num. xxvii. 2, 3, 4. All daughters moreover, were not sold, and those who were not had so much the greater claims on their husbands. Hence the complaint of Rachel against her father: "Hath he not counted us as strangers? for he hath sold us and hath quite devoured also our money (that which he got for us)" *Michaelis*, vol. ii. pp. 71, 75, 108. The custom of serving a term of years as payment for a wife is still common in Syria. *Kitto's Pictorial Palestine*, vol. i. p. 93.

given by Leah to her successive children, and the gift of the personal slave-attendants of each sister in turn to Jacob, as concubines, that each might adopt as her own the offspring thus born, speaks of long years of domestic misery. Leah herself bore her husband six sons and a daughter, the only one named in Jacob's family, though there no doubt were others.¹ Zilpah "the droppings of myrrh," Leah's maid, added to these, two sons, whom Leah adopted.

But now, at last, Rachel's sorrow is turned to joy by the birth of Joseph, a name which, by a play on the word, spoke at once of her reproach being "taken away" and of her hope that still another son would be "added."² Yet it was not till after long years that the second came, and then only to be Benoni, the "son of her sorrow."

The bargain with Laban for the wages of the third seven years shows craft met by more than its match. "I have consulted divination," says Laban, "and the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake:"³ a strange mixing of heathen rites with the true religion, in keeping with his worshipping household gods. "Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it." Anxious to return to Canaan, Jacob sees in the offer a means of wealth at which he grasps. The colour of flocks must have been less varied in Laban's day to let him accept the conditions offered; for those claimed by Jacob, the brown sheep, and the spotted, ring-streaked and speckled goats, are very numerous in every flock now.⁴ But had he known it, the cunning Jacob was less indebted to his fanciful schemes for

¹ Chap. xxxvii. 35.

² Asaph = to take away; jasaph = to add.

³ Rev. J. M. Rodwell, in *Trans. of Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. p. 115. The text quoted is Gen. xxx. 27.

⁴ Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 144. *Land and Book*, p. 202.

lessening Laban's wealth and increasing his own than he fancied, for it is certain that his device to secure the colours he wished could have no effect, and that the result was rather a direct favour from God.¹ The struggle is one of patient determination against every difficulty. The wage is ten times changed, and Jacob has to make good all losses by wild beasts or theft, by day or by night; but he keeps to his work with invincible patience, and honest fidelity. "In the day," said he, afterwards, without contradiction, to Laban, "the drought consumed me, and the frost by night,"² and my sleep departed from mine eyes. God has seen my trouble and the labour of my hands."

The story of his final flight to Canaan is perfect in its Oriental colouring. At the head of his flocks and herds; with his wives, children and slaves, he strikes away, across the Euphrates, at the utmost speed so cumbered a march allows, for Mount Gilead, the outpost of "his own country." His flight remains unsuspected for three days, but, then, Laban, hearing of it, sets off on swift camels in pursuit; overtaking the fugitives on the seventh day, while they were still among the richly wooded and watered hills of Gilead, which mark off the fertile land from the desert, east of the Jordan.

The five tents of Jacob and his wives³ had been pitched on the slope of the hills, apparently where they reach their highest elevation of 5,000 feet, not far from the

¹ *Tristram*, p. 144.

² The absence of clouds in hot countries permits so great a radiation of the heat of the earth into space, after sunset, there being no muffling of clouds to check it, that the nights are very cold. Hence rheumatism and similar ailments are especially common among the shepherds of Palestine. In *The Land and The Book*, the cold at night is noted, p. 369.

³ Chap. xxxi. 33.

Jabbok, the camels and flocks lying around, and now those of Laban are set up on a neighbouring hill, specially known as Mount Gilead. It is a moment of real danger to Jacob, for Laban's kinsmen, as the men of his tribe with him are called, are much the stronger.¹ He had given his daughters no inheritance,² and had treated Jacob with the utmost duplicity and harshness, but with true Arab dissimulation he chides Jacob for having stolen away without giving him an opportunity of dismissing him and his wives with a parting feast, or even letting him give his daughters a farewell kiss. That he was thus placable, was due, we are told, to a dream he had had overnight, warning him to do Jacob no harm. But the fugitives had done him the terrible wrong, as he must have thought it, of stealing his "gods," and these must be given back. Rachel, indeed, without Jacob's knowledge, had carried them off, doubtless for her own superstitious use, and had hidden them in one of the great basket-like bags fixed to the sides of her camel's saddle,³ as a commodious lounge on the journey; and now sat in it, over them, feigning sickness; so that, as politeness would not allow her to be disturbed, they were not discovered, and Laban had unwillingly to lose them.⁴

¹ ver. 29.

² ver. 14.

³ *Tristram*, p. 61. There is also a kind of palanquin, five feet long, with curtains over and around it, which is fastened across the saddle of the camels for ladies' travelling. It may have been something of this kind. Burckhardt's *Bedouins*, p. 370. Ker Porter's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 339.

⁴ It is to be noticed that in chap. xxxi. 32, Jacob tells Laban, that he will put to death any person in his encampment found to have stolen the gods. Thus, the patriarchs exercised the power of life and death. From chap. xxxviii. 24, it is further evident that even the heads of divisions or families in the encampment had this power. It is curious also to note, that Laban makes Jacob promise to take no more wives (chap. xxxi. 50).

A treaty must, however, in Arab fashion, be made between him and Jacob, as a witness to their quiet parting, and a mark of the bounds henceforth to be fixed between them. Gladly assenting, Jacob, seemingly still as strong as when he, singly, rolled off the great stone from the well mouth of Harran, by himself sets up on end a great stone as a memorial pillar; at the same time making his people pile up a cairn, like that which still marks off the limits of Arab tribes. On this, to confirm the treaty, the two parties hold a feast; for doing so, especially taking bread and salt together, is still among Arabs a solemn pledge of friendship and brotherhood, and if needed, of protection.¹ The night thus spent in friendship and joy, Laban and his camels strike off in the morning into the desert, and with them vanishes the last trace of the connection of the Israelites with Mesopotamia.² Gilead was henceforth the boundary between then and the Aramaic-speaking races of the east. The dialects of both peoples, indeed, marked the spot; for Jacob had followed Abraham and Isaac in the use of Hebrew, and called his cairn Mizpah, the watch tower; from whose height, in the simple ideas of the times, God is to look far and wide to see that the treaty is kept; while Laban, "the white Syrian," called it Galeed, instead of Gilead, as Jacob would have pronounced it.³

Breaking up his camp on the heights of Gilead, from whence he could look over into the Land of Promise, the

¹ The words Gen. xxxi. 54, "offered sacrifices," means "killed beasts for a feast."

² Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 63.

³ God is spoken of in this incident for the first and last time as, "the God of Abraham and of Nahor—the God of their father," (Terah)—if, indeed, Laban did not think of a god for each; for Dillmann translates it, the gods of their fathers. Jacob swears by God under the name of "The Fear' of his father Isaac.

past, with its failings and lower qualities seems to pass away from Jacob, and a higher spirit take their place. As angels had appeared when his wanderings began, so now, again, they visit him, perhaps this time also in a vision, even before he has crossed the Jordan on his return; to greet and welcome him back, and conduct him over the threshold of the sacred land. Henceforth he knows the place as Mahanaim, "the double camp,"—his own, and that of a host of angels,—a name it afterwards bore as one of the chief towns of Gilead.¹

But now a new danger threatens him. Having sent messengers, as Arab chiefs are wont to do with each other, to Esau, to announce his return, he learns to his dismay that he is already on the way to him with 400 men. All he has won for himself, and even the future possession of Canaan, seems in extreme peril. Anticipating the worst, he divides his encampment, that one part may escape should the other perish. But his agony of mind proves the crisis of his spiritual history.² Feeling at last that he must depend only on God, and smitten with the remembrance of his past sins, which after twenty years have thus found him out, he pours forth a prayer which breathes the purest humility, gratitude, and contrition. Taking all precautions to propitiate a brother he had so greatly offended, he spends the night at the ford of the torrent Jabbok, deep down where it enters the Jordan—a mental struggle from which he comes forth, no longer Jacob, "the supplanter;" but Israel, "a Prince of God." It is not necessary to materialize the scene; for the soul is the true sphere of that wrestling which secures

¹ Josh. xiii. 26, 30. ² Sam. ii. 8; xvii. 24, 27. 1 Kings iv. 14.

² Jacob's words in his prayer (xxxii. 11) are striking,—“He will come and smite me as one stabs the mother protecting with her body, her children like to be killed.” Ges., *Thes.*, p. 1027.

spiritual blessing. Nor does even the halting on his thigh involve any physical struggle, though it implies miraculous agency.¹ Its lesson is only an enforcement

¹ Gesenius says the Hebrew words "Gid ha Nasheh," translated in our version, "The sinew which shrank," ought to be the sciatic * nerve. In the Arabic the word means this. The sciatic nerve runs from the hip down the back of the thigh, and is so broad and thick it might readily be thought a sinew. It is, in fact, the largest nerve of the body. *Thes.*, p. 921. Mühlau, *Lex.*, p. 171.

"The failings of the patriarchs are human, and the fact that they are not passed over in their history makes even the story of these shepherds of priceless worth to me. The timid Isaac, the crafty Jacob, stand before me as they really were; but they also show that the craft of the latter was of little service to him, and in his old age he shows a chastened and tried character which makes him a Ulysses among those Shepherd Fathers. His history is an instructive mirror of the human heart, and God Himself has effaced the blots which the youthful Jacob bore in his very name. 'Thou shalt be no longer Jacob,' says He, 'but a hero of God, Israel,' a name of honour which the poetry of the race adopts. It is not bodily might that is recorded in it, but the heroism of God, prayer and faith. . . . Jacob has divided his camp and flocks from fear of a nocturnal surprise by his brother. Now, far from his tent, not to sleep, but rather to keep from sleep, he prayed he wrestled with God in supplication, and a visible symbol was granted him that his hero-like faith had prevailed. Elohim appeared, not Jehovah, and you know that that word is always used with a special significance in Jacob's history as well as in the earlier parts of Scripture. Hosts of God place themselves by him like two wings of an encamped army. . . . And lo, there appears the divine form of a heavenly warrior and wrestles with him. All vanish with the dawn—indeed the tone and colour of the whole narrative move dimly, as if under the mysterious shades of night. The wrestler does not give his name, but leaves it to be conjectured. Jacob does not triumph, tells the story to no one, only wonders how a simple shepherd like him could have seen Elohim face to face and still live. But the great charm is the inner lesson. It is shown the trembling patriarch how idle it is to fear Esau, when he has overcome Jehovah by his prayer."† Herder's *Ebräische Poesie*, vol ii. p. 19.

* Or ischiatic. † Hos. xii. 4, 5.

of what had preceded—that human policy is no safe reliance, but that he must trust in God.

He must be made to feel that He to whom he looks as his Protector, and on whose promises he relies, is pure and holy, and has no pleasure in lying and deceit. The mighty struggle was that of God with the still resisting evil of his nature; a struggle which cannot be spared any one destined to high spiritual ends, and conscious of being so. His whole past, from first to last, had been more or less a web of craft and contriving. He had striven with men and might flatter himself to have overreached them; but he has now to contend with God. The agony was long and terrible—through the whole darkness of night, till the dawn—but it was the wrestling of the new higher life with the old and evil; the agony of repentance and of a new birth, and from it he emerged a new man with a new name.¹ It was needed that he should have such a preparation to enter aright on his great inheritance, from which only the Jordan now divided him.

The dreaded meeting with Esau having passed off in peace, and his future friendship having been secured, with wonderful tact, by courtesy and splendid gifts; Jacob moves over the Jordan, to the first camping ground of his race in the vale of Shechem, consecrated by Abraham's altar, the oldest Hebrew sanctuary in the land; and thus the natural resting place of this second, and more weighty immigration from Chaldea.²

The re-appearance of Jacob and his shepherd tribe was, indeed, a great historical event, for they bore with them the future religious destinies of the world. Abraham's arrival had been only the first wave of the Hebrew

¹ Umbreit, *Studien und Kritiken* (1848), p. 121.

² Gen. xxxiii. 18, 20; xlviii. 22. Josh. xxiv. 32. John iv. 5, etc

movement, and it had, for the time, receded. In Jacob's return, it flowed back with permanent results. Ewald compares the new comers, as contrasted with other Arab immigrants, to the Franks among the German invaders of Western Europe—the freest, shrewdest, most advanced of their race; under a leader who reflected in his own character, at once the noblest and the most imperfect qualities of his descendants.¹

But Jacob is no longer like Abraham, only a shepherd chief, for the pastoral life is giving way to the agricultural, so that instead of pitching a tent, he “builds him an house,” and make booths or huts for his cattle—from which the place takes the name of Succoth.² The broad valley is no longer open pasture land, but belongs to Shechem, a Hivite chief, who has built a town on one part of it, and to the east of this,³ Jacob pitches his tent.⁴ Nor has he a thought of moving thence, but buys a field for a homestead, paying for it, no longer as Abraham had done, when he bought Machpelah, in silver weighed in scales, but with coined money, apparently bearing on it the oldest mark of coinage, the figure of a lamb.⁵ Here, after

¹ Graetz speaks of the “Shepherd tribe passing the Jordan on a fine sunny day of spring,” (vol. i. p. 1) but Dr. Thomson fixes the time as in autumn, from Jacob having lambs with him (Gen. xxxiii. 13), and also from his making booths at Shechem to protect his flocks, a step needful only in preparation for winter. *The Land and The Book*, p. 205.

² The Booths.

³ “Before the city,” east of it.

⁴ Our version says “Jacob came to Shalem,” and there is still a Salem among the hills on the east of the plain, opposite Shechem; but the word Shalem is thought by Mühlau and Volck to mean “in safety” (to Shechem). So Tuch, Knobel, Delitzsch and Kalisch.

⁵ Gesenius, *Thesaurus*, art. Kesita. Silver is the only money mentioned till David's time, when gold appears. The Phenicians used coin, other peoples still bartered. Ch. xxv. 25. Michaelis *Mos. Recht.*, vol. ii. p. 9. Wiseman's *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 109.

a time, he seems to have dug the well¹ which still bears his name, on his own purchased ground, to prevent any such disputes as had happened at Beersheba, and to secure water for his flocks at all times—even should his neighbours forbid him the use of the forty springs which are said to run through the valley;² and here, in after days, Joseph, now a growing lad, ordered that his bones should be buried. It was natural that, with these traditions, Shechem became for Ephraim what Hebron was to the whole race, and that it hence took the foremost place in the future history of the settlement of the northern part of the land.

But all did not go on peacefully in this sweetest of Palestine valleys. The treacherous sacking of Shechem, with its slaughter of all the men, the leading off the women and children as slaves, and the taking all the cattle and property, speaks at once for the numbers of Jacob's people, and for the deceitful ferocity of some, at least, of his sons.³ After such a deed, it was to be feared

¹ It was no slight undertaking to sink such a well, and indeed, in Palestine, it was a more famous work than the erection of a castle or a fortress. It is dug first through the alluvial soil, which is lined, throughout, with strong rough masonry, and then through the living rock, to an unknown depth. It is still about 75 ft. deep, but so recently as 1838 it was 30 ft. deeper; each year helping to fill it up, from the practice of all who visit it, both natives and travellers, throwing in stones to hear their rebound. This custom, which may be recent, adding to the accumulation of 4000 years, has filled it up perhaps one half. The shaft is $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter, and the whole work must have been the labour of years, and have been very costly.*

² *The Land and The Book*, p. 473. *Land of Israel*, p. 147.

³ Reuben does not seem to have taken part in it, perhaps as having a special responsibility as the eldest (xxxvii. 21; xlii. 22). the next eldest, Simeon and Levi, were therefore the leaders. The

* See, *My Life and Words of Christ*, vol i. p. 520.

that the neighbouring tribe-connections of the ruined community might join against the strangers who had acted so cruelly, and hence Jacob determined to leave the district. Yet Shechem seems to have remained permanently in the hands of his people, for it is it apparently which he gave on his death-bed to Joseph; when, with a play on the word used, characteristic of the Hebrews even in their most solemn acts, he assigned him a "portion" or rather "shoulder," more than his brethren: Shechem bearing that meaning.¹ Even in the peaceful Jacob, the fire of a warlike Arab chief seems in a moment to kindle, when he speaks of it as "taken from the hands of the Amorites with his sword and bow."

The vow made when at Bethel more than twenty years before, on his way to Harran, had not yet been honoured, and it was fitting that it should be so, now that Shechem must be left. Since Abraham's day circumcision had marked the Hebrews as the chosen people in contrast to the Canaanites; but the mere outward consecration to Jehovah was not enough; His exclusive worship was essential to the fulfilment of the national covenant with Him. Rachel's theft of her father's "gods" had shown, of itself, that the idolatry of Harran had a footing in the encampment, and it must be rooted out, if possible. The whole tribe, therefore, was required to give up everything heathen; Rachel, her father's gods or teraphim;² others

real ground of offence on the part of Shechem was, doubtless, his not belonging to the tribe; no offers of honourable reparation availed anything against the stain of a mixed marriage.

¹ ch. xlviii, 22. Besides, Joshua goes to Shechem without any notice of having needed to conquer it. Josh. viii. 30-35. See Michaelis, *Mosäisches Recht*, vol. i. p. 126.

² The word used is *teraphim*, which seem to have been originally

the idols, which, it seems, they cherished; and those who had them, the ear-rings and armlets,¹ used as idolatrous charms, and the whole, when gathered, were buried under the oak at Shechem; known hitherto as that beneath which Abraham's tent had been pitched, but henceforth as the "oak of the magicians."² A formal religious purification of the person and all raiment was

figures, generally of small size, and of hideous form, which were supposed to frighten away evil spirits from the house in which they were honoured. A small image in the Louvre, supposed to be a teraphim, is a frightful demon in its upper part, with the body of a dog, the feet of an eagle, hands armed with lion's claws, a scorpion's tail, a skeleton head with the flesh half off but the eyes remaining, goat's horns rising above, and four wings stretching round. This image was to be placed at the door or window, to turn back any demon. Lenormant's *La Magie*, p. 48. M. Botta found others at Khorsabad, in holes specially prepared for them, under the pavement before the gates of the palace. They were small images of baked clay, of forms as frightful as that of the one at the Louvre. See quotation in full in Mill's *Nablus*, p. 51. Teraphim is a plural form, perhaps from their always, apparently, consisting of parts of different beings. The root seems to mean "to strike with fear," but Gesenius (*Thesaurus*, p. 1518) gives a different origin. The worship of teraphim continued in Israel till the exile (Ewald's *Alt.*, p. 256; *Gesch.*, vol. i. p. 462), but the subject will be better treated at a later period. One is reminded, while on this subject, of the name of Germanicus, graven on lead talismans, magic characters, and other enchantments, found on the ground and round the walls of that doomed man's house, and regarded even by Tacitus as bearing on his death. *Annal.*, ii. 49.

¹ It is curious to note that our word cameo is the Aramaic Kamea = an amulet, worn to guard the person from magical charms. See *Amulette*, in Winer and Riehm. Ear-rings were worn for the same purpose. They were apparently engraved with magical characters or idolatrous signs. We read in Hosea ii. 13, of "ear-rings of Baalim."

² Judges ix. 37. Translated in our version, "The plain of Meonenim."

likewise enforced, in preparation for a renewed consecration of the whole community to the worship of the God of Bethel alone, at that venerated sanctuary.

The later years of the patriarch breathe a spirit of religious fidelity becoming such an act. At Bethel he builds an altar alongside the memorial stone raised to Him who “answered him in the day of his distress, and was with him in the way which he went,” and consecrated



RACHEL'S SEPULCHRE.

it by a drink offering and anointing. But this devotion was soon disturbed by the shadow of trouble. Rebekah was dead, but Deborah, the nurse of her childhood and her bosom friend to the last, had come to close her days in the tents of the favourite son—and now she also passed away amidst such general grief, that the tree under which she was buried received the name of the “oak of weeping.”

A still greater trial, however, was near. After perhaps fifteen or sixteen years from the birth of Joseph, Rachel died, at the birth of a second son, and Jacob had to bury her "in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." It has long disappeared, but a tomb, raised apparently on the same spot, still preserves its memory. How tenderly he loved her, even to the last hour of his life, appears in repeated touches. Her infant is to her "as her soul was in departing," Benoni—"the son of my anguish;" but to his father he is Benjamin, "the son of his right hand," that is, of his good fortune. At the loss of his son Joseph he "refuses to be comforted and will go down into the grave,¹ to my son, mourning," and in his last words to Joseph's sons, before he died in Egypt, forty years after her death, he repeats the whole story of her being taken away from him, as tenderly as if it had happened but yesterday.

Moving his desolate tent only a little way from the grave, to "the watch-tower of the flocks,"² he rested for a time near a spot so holy; then, moved on slowly to Hebron; "for the children were tender, and the flocks and herds with young were with him, and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock would die."³ There, in the scenes of his youth and boyhood, he once more saw his father; and with him, or near, he stayed,

¹ The grave = Sheol, the region of the dead, is the word used. It means "the hollow." In Job xi. 8, the depth of Sheol is said to be only less wonderful than "the depth" (perfection) "of God" (ver. 7). The Shades of the dead were there in darkness (Job x. 22).

² Micah iv. 8. Migdal Edar.

³ Chap. xxxiii. 13. For the risk of over-driving flocks in Palestine, see *The Land and The Book*, p. 331.

dutifully, till the old man died. Esau had long ago finally left Canaan, preferring the rough mountains of Seir, with their life of adventure and plunder, to the quiet monotony of pastoral or agricultural toil; but he and Jacob met once more at the burial of Isaac in the Cave of Machpelah, beside Abraham, Sarah, and Rebekah.

Always as much inclined to sow and reap, as to follow a pastoral life,¹—for Isaac's fields and sheaves, long ago,



SHEPHERDS' REFUGE TOWER.
From "*L'Egypte—Etat Modern.*"

in Gerar, had turned his tastes that way—Jacob settled down in the district dear to him from the memories of his youth, and "dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger." Thence, however, his flocks were led far and near, as pasture offered, for we find them as far north as Shechem. It was in the pastures of its broad valley that Joseph found his brethren when sent from his father

¹ Chap. xxxvii. 7.

at Hebron to ask after their welfare, and it was at Dothan, or Dothain—the two wells—now Tell Dothan, north of Samaria, among the hills of Gilboa,¹ that the Arab caravan to which he was sold was seen toiling along the road which stretches from Bethlehem over the plains of Esdraelon towards the great sea-coast road to Egypt.

Nor is it without interest to find that Dr. Clarke met precisely here a caravan of Ishmaelitish spice traders, “who certainly would have been glad to have bought another Joseph, to carry him off to Egypt,”² while Canon Tristram, riding along the ridge of the hill, above the little plain, which still ranks as the best pasturage in the country; in the same way saw, below, a long caravan of mules and asses, laden, on their way from Damascus to the valley of the Nile.³ The two wells are still in existence in the valley, one of them even now bearing the name of the “pit of Joseph.” It is about three feet in diameter and at least thirty feet deep, the walls lined with masonry, but the bottom hewn out of the rock. Yet, as the water in it never dries up, it is hard to imagine that it can be the actual well into which Joseph was cast.⁴ Dothan now shows little more than a wilderness of cactus or prickly-pear bushes, yet within even a few years past it was richly planted with citrons, oranges, and pomegranates, but they were destroyed by some troops sent from Nablus, to quell a local disturbance.⁵

¹ Conder's *Handbook*, p. 409. Dillmann, p. 408. *The Land and The Book*, p. 466.

² *Travels by Dr. E. D. Clarke* (London, 1822).

³ *Land of Israel*, p. 134.

⁴ Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria* (1822), p. 318.

⁵ Guérin, *Description de la Palestine*, vol. ii. p. 319. The caravans come up the Ghor Beisan, pass by Terin and Lejjun, enter the hill country of Samaria by the valley of Dothain, and then go on to Ramleh, Gaza, and Egypt. *The Land and The Book*, p. 460.

The close of Jacob's life saw the second temporary migration of the Hebrews to Egypt—this time to stay there for centuries. But this wider sphere belongs to a future chapter. The valley of the Nile was destined, in Providence, to be the shelter and nursery of Israel till it should grow from a tribe to a nation. "Fear not," said the Divine voice in a vision, "to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation; I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again, and Joseph will put his hand upon thine eyes," to close them in death. Thither, therefore, over the uplands of Beersheba, and through the gates of the frontier wall, the patriarch went; to meet his long lost son again, and to stand before the great Pharaoh. And there, in the fulness of time, when he felt himself dying, he left the command; in striking illustration of his abiding trust in the covenant of God with his race; that his bones should not rest in the gorgeous sepulchres of the Nile, but beside those of his fathers in the Cave of Machpelah; a pledge to his descendants of their future inheritance of the land of which their leaders had thus in death taken possession.





CHAPTER XXIV.

JOSEPH.

THE return of Jacob to Canaan was the first great step towards the formation of a Hebrew people. Hitherto there had been only individuals of the race; but with the family of Jacob it branched into numerous heads of the future tribes of Israel. The formal and solemn acceptance of the traditional faith of Abraham, by these at Bethel, determined henceforth the history of Israel as identified with the perpetuation and spread among mankind of the great doctrine of the Unity of God, and of the high standard of life which was known as "the way of Jehovah."¹ They had already been separated from the idolatrous nations around by circumcision—a sign of dedication to God borne about on their persons—and had come to regard it as a badge of proud superiority.² Everything which connected them with idolatry had been ignominiously buried beneath the oak at Moreh, and, at Bethel, they had, further, solemnly forsworn it as a community. If Abraham was the first preacher of God and His righteousness, the honour is due to Jacob of first having established the great patriarch's belief as the accepted faith of the Hebrew race.

But Canaan offered no facilities for the development of

¹ Gen. xviii. 19.

² Gen. xxxiv. 14

the nationality thus begun, while in the neighbouring Egypt, the great oasis of Arab geography, every condition was at hand. Thither, therefore, in the all-wise Providence of God, the embryo people were transferred, and that by an agency the most unlikely to bring it about—the sale of one brother by the others, as a slave, to a passing Ishmaelite caravan.

The story of Joseph is too universally known to need recapitulation in detail, but the illustrations it affords of Eastern and Egyptian manners are at once so interesting, and so confirmatory of the Bible narrative, that they may well command our attention. Intended to follow the shepherd life, Joseph first comes before us as learning the craft, under his half brothers,¹ the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, and incurring their hatred by letting their father know their manner of life. Only seventeen, and alike simple and pure, he was naturally a favourite with Jacob, now at least a hundred years old, and he was still more so as the elder son of his best loved and now lost wife, Rachel. Nor did the fond weakness of old age try to hide his partiality, for while all his other sons had the common shepherd's coat, reaching to the knees only, and without sleeves, he had one reaching to the ankles, with sleeves to the wrists,² and very possibly of fine Egyptian linen. Though not necessarily implied in the Hebrew words used, it may have been of "many" colours, for in the tomb at Beni Hassan,

¹ The words "the lad was with." are translated "and he was a servant with," by Gesenius and Knobel.

² "Not a coat of many colours." *Kamphausen*, arts. *Farbenkleider*, in *Riehm. Ges., Thes.*, p. 1117 a, a garment long and full, worn by the children of nobles. Or, perhaps a parti-coloured robe, with sleeves and reaching to the feet. *Jos., Ant.*, vii. 8, 1. 2 Sam. xiii. 18.

Semitic visitors are seen dressed in robes of white, red and blue, apparently made of a patchwork of separate small pieces. It is, moreover, usual still in the East to dress favourite children in this way. Purple, scarlet, and other colours are pieced together with great taste, or the jackets worn are embroidered with gold, and silk of different shades.¹ The Turks at Haleb, Rauwulf tells us, have the same custom with their growing sons.² Such a dress of honour may have seemed to foreshadow Joseph's being made the heir, especially as Reuben and the elder sons had lost their father's favour by their misconduct. In any case, it roused jealous anger, which was only to be abated by the lad's death or his being sent away. The incident of the pit³ is quite in keeping with Eastern customs, for underground cisterns abounded in Palestine, and when dry, were so often used for a dungeon—escape from them being impossible,⁴ from their frequently bottle-like shape—that the Hebrew word for them also means a prison.⁵ The passage of an Arab caravan towards

¹ T. Smith's *Joseph*, p. 1. Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations*.

² Rosenmüller, *A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 174.

³ They agree not to put him to a violent death, but to leave him in the dry rain-cistern to starve to death.

⁴ The Canaanites had already dug many such cisterns (Deut. vi. 11) over the whole land (Neh. ix. 25). Towns, fields, and pastures alike needed them in a country largely dependent on rain-water as Palestine always was. Agriculture and grazing also imperatively required them, and hence any one who devoted himself largely to these had to dig many, as in the case of King Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi 10). The Moabite Stone of King Meza, orders every house in Korcha Dibon to have one to catch the rain-water. It was such a cistern as that into which Joseph was put that Jeremiah had for a dungeon (Jer. xxxviii. 6; Lam. iii. 53). They were generally covered over with a great stone. *Winer. Riehm*, art. Brunnen.

⁵ Exod. xii. 29. Isa. xxiv. 22. Jer. xxxvii. 16.

Egypt,¹ and its purchase of Joseph, is equally true to early times, and to the unchanging Eastern life of to-day. Sir Samuel Baker's boy, Saat, had, in the same way as Joseph, been carried off, while he was tending goats, by an Arab caravan; hidden in a gum sack, and finally taken to Cairo and sold as a slave.² "All the world may perish, so far as we care," said an Arab to Niebuhr, "if only Egypt remains." And it was left to them even more in Joseph's day than now, from the dislike of Egyptians to leave their country even for purposes of gain. The trade in "spices" was exceptionally great between the valley of the Nile and neighbouring countries; from the quantity used for embalming mummies, for burning as incense, or as disinfectants; for which they were in great repute. Even the names of the first and second of the three spices named—gum tragacanth,³ from Lebanon and Palestine generally, Armenia and Persia; balsam from the balsam-tree of Gilead; and ladanum—the gum collected still from the leaves of the cistus-rose—from Syria and Arabia, have been found in the list of 200 drugs named in the temple-laboratory of Edfu; for each temple had its laboratory and apothecary.⁴ Even the twenty

¹ The name "Midianites" is used for the caravan as well as "Ishmaelites"—as equivalent to "trader"—just as the word "Canaanite" is similarly used. Both peoples, moreover, were descendants of Abraham, and Arabs "One needs to go to Egypt," says Ebers, ". . . to see the brown-skinned children of Israel, who brought camels richly laden from the East to the Nile. They are there drawn to the life on the monuments."

² Baker's *Albert Nyanza*, p. 85.

³ Translated "spicery" in our version.

⁴ Ebers' *Ägypten*, etc., pp. 290 ff. Dümichen, *Tempelinschriften, Edfu*, Taf. 52-75. *Geographische Inschriften*, Taf. 80-100. The trade with Egypt, as shown by the vegetable remains found in the tombs near the pyramids, included, amongst other things, jun-

pieces of silver given for Joseph are exactly the price fixed under Moses as that of a male slave between five and twenty years of age;¹ so nearly had human beings kept the same value for centuries.

The existence of slavery in Egypt is strikingly illustrated by countless pictures of slaves of both sexes, and of every colour, on the monuments, and still more so by the existence to this day of manuscripts in which disconsolate owners offer rewards to any who will bring back fugitive slaves. One of these is an advertisement by Prince Atefamen, a son of Rameses II., the great taskmaster of the Jews before the Exodus; and it is further certain that among these slaves were Hebrews and others of Semitic blood,² since under Rameses II. the Hebrew word for slave—*ēbed*—is often used, and we read of

per berries from Phenicia; cedar-wood for sarcophagi, wooden images, etc.; cedar and pine resin; gums to bind the mummy cloths; myrrh, incense. The Great Harris Papyrus recounts among the gifts presented by Rameses III. to the temples, immense quantities of incense, wax, oil, perfumes, honey, etc., etc. The list, in endless variety, fills twenty-four pages of *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. pp. 23 ff.

The very names of two of the three "spices" carried to Egypt by Joseph's caravan are named in the papyri—the balm and the gum tragacanth—the same words being used for them as in the Hebrew Bible. Ladanum, the third mentioned in Genesis, is often found in the mummy cases, and its odour may be detected among those of other materials used in embalming the mummies. These three substances, moreover, are still principal articles of commerce between the East and Egypt. *Vigouroux*, vol. ii. p. 17.

¹ Lev. xxvii. 5.

² Syrian slaves sold in the bazaars of Memphis or Thebes were in special demand, and brought a very high price. Syrians and negroes were used, among other ways, to run before their master's chariot in the streets; a gold cane in their hand, or a whip, guiding the horses and clearing the way

Syrian slaves¹ who, indeed, were prized more than any others, as was afterwards the case in Greece and Rome. It was therefore a fortunate chance for the Ishmaelites to secure Joseph, a Syrian, for the Egyptian market. The special value of such slaves is strikingly shown by the fact, that in the treaty of Rameses II. with the Khetas, we find a clause providing that fugitives, who might flee to Syria, should be sent back to Egypt,² and there still remains a letter of a scribe to his father, the prophet Ramessu, of Hermopolis, telling all his adventures in an attempt to recover a runaway.³

The name of Potiphar, the Egyptian by whom Joseph was bought, is strictly Egyptian, and means one "dedicated to Ra," the Sun god; whose worship had its great centre at Heliopolis, in the south of Lower Egypt, close to Memphis, the favourite residence of the Pharaoh of Joseph's time, a great patron of the worship of Ra. The court of this king, like that of the other Pharaohs, abounded with officials of every kind—Privy Councillors, King's Relations, Masters of the Horse, Directors of the Court Music, Astrologers and Interpreters of Dreams, Librarians, Ministers of Public Buildings and of Tombs, Chiefs of the Palace, Treasurers of the Household and of the Kingdom; and, not to make the list too long, royal Fan-bearers, who seem to have been the highest civil officers of the Court and to have stood at the Pharaoh's right hand. On the left side, as the unprotected and weak one, stood the chief military officers who formed a kind of special bodyguard, though there was also a force of guards, 2,000 men strong, who were better

¹ Ebers, p. 294. Riehm, 760.

² Maspero, p. 223.

³ Chabas, *Mélanges Egyptologiques*, 3rd series, vol. i. p. 231. Soury, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (15th Feb., 1875), p. 808.

paid than the soldiers of the line. But Potiphar could scarcely have been head of this force, as it was changed each year, while he lived permanently at Memphis. It seems, rather, that he was at the head of what we may call the Egyptian State police, which formed one of the corps of the army, though largely employed in civil duties.¹

This body was already numerous and well organized in very ancient times, and had very extensive duties; for it was the law that every citizen had to appear yearly before the Police Superintendent of his district, and show how he made his living; any false statement being punished with death.

In Egypt, as in the Austria of to-day, everything was written down. The whole population of each "Nomos," or district, gathered under its standard, were enrolled singly by scribes in a register, on a fixed day; even the slaves being thus entered on the official lists. There is, indeed, a picture of such a yearly assembling, on one of the monuments of the 19th dynasty.² Nor was this more than a small part of the duties of the State police. They were charged with the detection and punishment of criminals; the pursuit and recapture of fugitive slaves; the safe watching of the countless prisoners of war; and the due execution of the forced labour of the people on public works, and of the toil of the public slaves at their set tasks. Duties so varied required a large body of men, and hence, besides scribes and officials charged with administering punishments, there had been organized, at least as early as the time of Abraham, a kind of gendarmerie corps, originally of foreigners; and with these were joined other bands of foreign soldiery, raised from Sardinia and elsewhere, who formed part of the personal

¹ *Vigouroux*, vol. ii. p. 28.

² *Wilkinson*, vol. ii. p. 33.

state and protection of the Pharaoh. Over the whole there was necessarily a head officer, who, like the chiefs of other departments of government, was attached to the court, under the sounding title of "the two eyes of the King of Upper, and the two ears of the King of Lower Egypt."

It is probable that this was the dignity held by Potiphar, for it would give him precisely the duties which we find assigned to him—the charge of prisoners and prisons, and of bodily punishments and executions.¹

The position of Joseph, as head over all the slaves in his master's house, and over all the household affairs, was one which constantly presents itself from the earliest times on the monuments and in the literature of Egypt. Every great family had a slave thus placed over all the rest, and indeed, Joseph himself, after his elevation, had such a majordomo. Wherever grain is being measured, or metal weighed, or building or agricultural work is going forward, the paintings show us the head-overseer of the household with a short rod in his hand, or with a writing tablet in his hand and a pen behind his ear; to take down the number of sheaves, or of casks, or of the cattle or flocks, and, like Joseph, he is expressly described as the "overseer." There were under-overseers of slaves, of the herds, etc., but the chief under whom all stood ranked very much higher than his subordinates, and was honoured by the special title of "governor of the house." In one papyrus, a "head-overseer of the cattle" is mentioned, who, stirred by ambition, betakes himself to magic, and comes to a sad end; and there is hardly a tomb of the rich, in the wall paintings of which we do

¹ Ebers, pp. 295–303. Ebers' *Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 205, n. 23, vol. ii. p. 6, n. 7. Riehm, p. 760. Dillmann calls him "Captain of the palace guard." *Genesis*, on the verse.

not meet with counterparts of Joseph's position in the household of Potiphar.¹

These strange palaces of the dead, in fact, bring before us continually the economy of great Egyptian establishments, such as he had to superintend in all its departments; for his office set him not only over the interior of the house, but over the varied labours of the field and of the estate. Nor was it a slight responsibility; for Egyptian courtiers were often immensely rich, and not a few of them take care to tell us in their tomb-inscriptions exactly the number of their cattle of every kind. One, for example, states that he had 835 oxen, 220 cows and calves, 760 asses, 2,235 goat-like sheep, and 974 goats; while another boasts of having possessed 405 cattle of one kind, 1,237 of a second, 1,360 of a third, 1,220 calves, and so on, while his geese, ducks, and doves were numbered by thousands.² Country houses and gardens are shown by the tombs to have been an especial delight of the wealthy, and these mansions have so many storehouses in them that an overseer was evidently indispensable. Rooms are seen full of flagons, jars, and vessels of every shape and of the most varied contents—gold and silver plate, dried fish, bread, bars of metal, etc.³ In such a huge establishment the clear head and high principle of a man like Joseph would be invaluable, and it is only what might have been expected when we read that “seeing he had him, Potiphar concerned himself about nothing”⁴ except his food, which the strict Egyptian laws of ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness

¹ Prisse d’Avennes, *Monuments Egyptiens* (1847), pl. 41. *Wilkinson*, vol. ii. p. 136. Hengstenberg, *Die Bücher Mose’s*, p. 23. *Ebers*, p. 304.

² Brugsch, *Gräberwelt*, p. 47.

³ *Wilkinson*, vol. ii. p. 129. *Ebers*, p. 304.

⁴ Gen. xxxix. 6

would not permit a foreigner, especially of the shepherd caste, to touch.

The relation of husband and wife, as implied in the story of Potiphar's wife, has been objected to as not in keeping with a state of society like that of the Egyptians. But the paintings on the tombs and temples show with how little reason this criticism has been made. So far from being secluded from each other, the two sexes sat together at their parties and mingled freely in daily life, as may be seen in the pictures copied by Wilkinson.¹ In one of these the guests, of both sexes, sit, in company, in their best adornment, each smelling a lotos flower; while a female slave hands round the cup. The buffet is laden with every delicacy—fruits, pastry, cooked fowl, and jars of many kinds of drinks; naked female dancers, meanwhile, entertaining the party with their skill, to the music of a band of women; one of whom is playing on a flute, while the others set the time by measured clapping of their hands, accompanied, it is likely, with their voices. In the other picture, the company is also made up of both ladies and gentlemen. Some slaves are putting necklaces, as ornaments, round the necks of the invited, while others carry napkins, apparently for the use of those whom they may serve; to wipe their lips or hands. Women, indeed, appear to have had exceptional freedom and privileges in Egypt, if we may credit the ancients; for Herodotus says that they went to market while the men sat and wove at home, and that the duty of providing for aged parents lay on the daughters, and not on the sons.² Diodorus, moreover, asserts that on the Nile the queen was more honoured than the king, and that wives ruled their husbands, who were required in their

¹ Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. pp. 142, 143.

² *Herod.*, ii. 35.

marriage contracts to promise due obedience to their spouses! ¹—an extraordinary arrangement which the monuments, at least in part, corroborate. In most cases the wife is spoken of as the “mistress of the house,” or “the great house mistress,” and the name of the mother stands always on a line with that of the father, but frequently before it, while the sons are often named only after their mothers. ² At many receptions of foreign ambassadors the queen has the precedence. In almost all the graves and mummy papyri, man and wife sit beside each other, as bound to each other not only in this life, but in that beyond; and on countless tomb pictures we see the two sitting on a couch, the husband with his arm round his wife’s neck, or the wife with hers round that of her husband. No boast is more frequent in funeral inscriptions than of the tenderness each felt to the last hour for the other, and wives are lamented as “devoted to their husbands,” as “loving him,” as “the palm-tree of love” to overshadow him. Reigning queens are mentioned from the earliest times, and not infrequently attained great fame as sovereigns; ranking, like the Pharaohs, even during their life, as divine beings. In death, moreover, women were more honoured than men, for female mummies are as a rule more richly embalmed, adorned, and entombed than those of the other sex.

Marriage was thus as sacred on the Nile as with ourselves. Man and wife ate together and lived together—not in separate chambers as in other Eastern nations—and a divorce was difficult to obtain; while infidelity on either side was one of the mortal sins which the soul had to prove, before the judges of the dead, that it had not committed. There was nothing, therefore, to prevent Joseph

¹ *Diod.*, i. 27. See also note on this subject, Ebers’ *Königs-tochter*, vol. i. p. 234.

² *Ebers*, p. 307.

and his mistress often meeting in her mansion, and, indeed, his duties may have required him to do so, as in the case of a wonderfully beautiful woman, whom a papyrus represents as going to the temple of Ptah to pray, attended by fifty maidens, in the company of a male slave; doubtless, like Joseph, of high position. Yet concubines and harems were not unknown in Egypt, for the Pharaohs, like all Eastern despots, indulged in this immorality, and had a "house of the women," over which eunuchs were placed; and the dignitaries of the land copied the example. But these mistresses were in no respect on a footing with the lawful wife, who sits beside her husband while the others amuse him as singers and dancers.¹

That with all the honour paid to marriage, however, cases of painful breach of its duties were only too common in Egypt, is strangely illustrated by the "Story of the Two Brothers,"² a tale some centuries older than the Exodus, and thus perhaps contemporary with Joseph himself. It is almost exactly a repetition of the incident of Potiphar's wife, except that the victim is a younger brother of the husband, and suffers even more than Joseph; though in the end raised, like him, for his virtues, to the highest honours, while the wife is, at last, killed and thrown to the dogs by the god Anubis. Egyptian women, as a whole, had, indeed, only too doubtful a name, in spite of the virtues of many: for ancient testimony weighs very heavily to their prejudice.³ Indeed, the very liberty enjoyed by the sex,

¹ With all the strictness of marriage law in Egypt, it is strange to notice that fashion allowed wives to expose their right breast in company, and to dress in stuffs which were well nigh transparent.

² Brugsch, *Aus dem Orient* (Berlin, 1864), p. 7.

³ Hitzig's *Geschichte*, p. 57.

amidst influences so corrupting as those of the Egyptian religion, and the strange custom of dressing in fabrics so transparent as to show the whole person through them, were unfavourable to morality. The paintings of the tombs show the delight of Egyptian women in all the elegancies and little vanities of life. We can see from them how a rich matron of Thebes or Memphis spent her mornings. Slaves enter her chamber bringing delicate embroidered tunics, of brilliant colours; boxes of perfumes; caskets filled with bracelets and necklaces; bronze mirrors, and precious little cases. Reclining on a couch of ebony incrustated with ivory, she lets herself be dressed and adorned by her maids. One twists her black hair into small plaits, adding false ones to make up the number which a fashionable head-dress demands; another covers her arms, her ancles, and her bosom with rings, jewels, and amulets; she tries some finger-rings of gold with engraved stones; chooses the ear-rings which she will wear for the day; and while one slave opens the collyrium boxes and another mixes in the toilette cups the different ingredients for staining the nails, the eye-lashes, and the eye-brows, she listens vaguely, cooled by the soft air of fans, and wooed by the gentle music of lutes, harps, and flutes.¹ No wonder that a life of such effeminacy in the worst sense, should lead to scenes of offensive excess in wine at table among Egyptian ladies, or to others too gross to be described, painted on the walls of the Temple of Medineh Abu.²

The prison into which Joseph was thrown—"a place where the king's prisoners were bound"—is described in the Hebrew Bible by a word which Delitzsch explains as meaning "the fortress surrounded by a wall," and

¹ Soury, *Études Historiques sur les religions de l'Asie antérieure*, p. 166.

² *Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 52.

such a prison, called by them the White Castle, is mentioned by Thucydides¹ and Herodotus,² as existing in Memphis, and is found under the same name on many Egyptian inscriptions. Memphis itself, indeed, was known by three names; its common one, Mennefer, "the Haven of the Good;" its sacred one, "the Dwelling of Ptah," for every Egyptian town had a sacred as well as a profane name; and also as the "the Town of the White Castle."³ This citadel comprised the barracks of the garrison, some temples, and especially the prisons, and was under an officer of engineers, known as the Superintendent-in-Chief of the Walls and Fortifications of Memphis.⁴ Nor was the office an honorary one, for the fortress and defences were so strong that they were reduced by Cambyzes, more than a thousand years later, only after a regular siege. Potiphar, as Minister of Police, was, no doubt, the head of the citadel, or "House of the prison," as it is called in the Hebrew of Genesis, the words used being common in the inscriptions, as including the whole aggregate of buildings in any establishment.⁵

¹ *Thuc.*, i. 104.

² *Herod.*, iii. 13, 91. Ebers' *Ægypten*, p. 311. Stories from Greek legend, parallel to that of Potiphar's wife, may be found in Rosenmüller's *A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 185. It is an aggravation of the charge against Joseph that he, a Hebrew, one of the unclean shepherd race, should have acted so.

³ The word Memphis is the Coptic name for the city. The Copts are the modern representatives of the ancient Egyptians. The Arabic name is Menf or Menuf. These are only corruptions of Mennefer.

⁴ Brugsch, *Geographische Inschriften*, Taf. 42, p. 1095.

⁵ Beth, the Hebrew word for house, which has this wide signification, is very common in the inscriptions, having no doubt been adopted from the Semitic races of Canaan, with whom the Egyptians were frequently at war. It is found in the Egyptian

In the part of this fortress devoted to prisoners of state, and, as such, more strictly watched than any other, Joseph was imprisoned; ordinary criminals having their cells in other parts of the great building. Potiphar had no power over his life, for the old law of Egypt protected the slave thus far,¹ but he might have mutilated him, or have inflicted a thousand blows of the stick on him had he chosen; the fact that he did neither showing that, while he could not quite disbelieve his wife's story, he was



THE WHITE CASTLE AT MEMPHIS, IN WHICH JOSEPH WAS CONFINED. FROM THE FAMOUS MOSAIC PAVEMENT AT PRÆNESTÆ.

still so prepossessed in Joseph's favour that he left it to time to show how the truth really lay.

But even the suspicious eyes of the jailer soon saw the innocence of the prisoner, and hence he was ere long as high in favour with him as he had been with Potiphar, a result which, strangely enough, in the end brought about his deliverance.

lists of conquered Canaanitish cities, before the entrance of the Hebrews into Egypt. The other word, Sohar, is an Egyptian one.

¹ *Soury*, p. 165.

The king's cupbearer, and the chief of his bakers,¹ who had fallen into disgrace and were confined in the same building as Joseph, are shown by the Egyptian records to have been very high officials; for both had the responsible duty of protecting the king's life from poison. The post of the former, in particular, gave him constant and confidential access to the Pharaoh, who drank only what he received from his hand; while the other had not only to oversee the due supply of the court with the endless cakes and bakemeats in which Egyptians delighted, but to take care that they were not tampered with for traitorous ends.

Numerous inscriptions show the great importance attached by the Egyptians to dreams. In one, the Prince of Bachtan is recorded as having sent back to Egypt, in consequence of a dream, the god Chunsu, which the Pharaoh had sent him to cure his daughter.² Another states how King Menephtah had a dream before a battle, in which the god Ptah placed himself before him, and forbade him to advance.³ An inscription discovered in the ruins of Napata, relates how the Pharaoh Miamun, in the year of his elevation to the throne of Egypt and Ethiopia, dreamed that he saw two serpents; one on his right hand and the other on his left. Awaking, he demanded that his wise men should come and interpret it on the moment, and this they did as follows: "You possess the south, and the north will submit to you. The diadems of the two will shine on your head, and you will rule over all the land in its length and in

¹ Both Potiphar and these two high officials are called eunuchs in the Hebrew, but this may have been merely a name of office.

² Stele of Rameses II. in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris.

³ Chabas, *Études*, p. 214. Dümichen, *Historische Inschriften*, Taf. 3.

its breadth.”¹ Dreams were regarded as sent by the god Thoth, and it was so great a matter to obtain them that recipes are still extant telling how they may be secured. It was natural, therefore, that the two disgraced officials should be greatly excited to find out the meaning of the supposed Divine communications that had been sent them. Cut off as they were by the prison walls from the priests who alone interpreted dreams, they would doubtless be only too glad to avail themselves of such irregular help as the presence of Joseph promised to afford.

Nothing could be more perfectly Egyptian than the cupbearer seeing in his sleep a vine with three branches, which presently blossomed, and then hung thick with ripened clusters; grapes from which he pressed into Pharaoh's cup. Even in the Old Empire, before the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, both the vine, and its juice used as a beverage, were familiar in the valley of the Nile. The tombs at the pyramids, which are much older than the time of Joseph, show not only richly laden vines in process of being picked into baskets,² but also the preparation of the grape juice, from its being pressed out of the clusters to the storing it in jars. At Beni Hassan, the tomb walls, which date from the Old Empire, show a very curious wine-press—a kind of sack fixed between upright posts and filled with grapes, which give off their juice into a vessel below on the sack being twisted round at one end, as women wring clothes in washing.³ In the tombs at Thebes we have a picture of a great garden with a vineyard in the middle, in which a

¹ Soury, *Études sur les Religions*, p. 170. Lenormant, *La Divination*, p. 144.

² *Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 41.

³ *Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 45.

boy scares off the birds from the ripe grapes, while men, singing as they work, tread out with their naked feet the clusters heaped into a huge vat. Overhead is a roof with hanging ropes, to which the men cling as they spring up and down on the yielding mass, the juice meanwhile flowing through two openings into jars on the ground. The master stands by while these are counted, entered in a book, and placed closely side by side in his cellar;¹ under the care of an image of the asp, or good demon, the protecting deity of the storeroom. That this juice, moreover, was used after fermentation as well as before, is only too clearly shown by the pictures of the feasts already mentioned, for even women are seen in them, with the doubled up lotos flower, the sign of drunkenness, hanging over their arm, or led out, offensively sick, by a female slave.² Nor are the men more temperate, for one is being carried away resting on the heads of three slaves, while another is being taken home most uncomfortably,—his head resting on the chest of one slave, his heels on the shoulders of another.³ Workmen had rations of bread and wine allowed them, and there was a fixed allowance of two kinds for the priests. At the town of Bubastis, moreover, on the edge of Goshen, a yearly carnival at the great sanctuary of Pacht or Sechet attracted often seven hundred thousand people, who drank more while it lasted than they did all the year besides.⁴ Another similar festivity was held yearly at the temple of Hathor, the goddess of love, at Dendera,

¹ *Wilkinson*, vol. i. pp. 46, 47.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53. *Tristram's Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 403. *Michaelis*, *Mos. Recht.*, vol. iv. p. 70.

⁴ *Herodotus*, ii. 37, 60, 122, 168, 133. *Ebers' Durch Gosen*, pp. 18, 182, 480. *Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 228, n. 132; vol. ii. p. 261, n. 73.

which bore the significant name of the drinking feast; the goddess herself bearing among other names that of "the goddess of drunkenness," or even "the drunken."¹ "The people of Denderah are drunk with wine," says an inscription, speaking of this feast.² Still more, Rameses III., in his record of his gifts to the gods, reminds those of Thebes that he gave them numberless vineyards, and many gardeners, from the captives of all lands, to cultivate them; and this he repeated to those of other parts. Nor did it hinder his adding gifts of nearly 200,000 jars of wine to the various temples.

Where wine and its use were divinely sanctioned, no class could well be prohibited from it. Drunkenness, indeed, was denounced as strongly as among ourselves. A drunkard was called "a temple without a god," or "a house without bread," and men were earnestly warned to shun indulgence. Yet too many drank till "they knew nothing, and could not even speak."³ The kings, however, whose whole life was regulated by the priests, had their allowance of wine and the kinds permitted them fixed by these spiritual guides;⁴ but a despot is not easily kept within bounds, however it may have been with the particular Pharaoh whose beverage in the cupbearer's dream, was only grape juice fresh from the cluster.⁵ But that this is a literally correct trait of Egyptian life has been curiously illustrated by a text discovered by Ebers in the inscriptions of the Temple of Edfu, in which the king is seen standing, cup in hand,

¹ Ebers' *Ägypten*, p. 326. *Records of Past*, vol. vi. pp. 23-70.

² Dümichen's *Bau-urkunde*, p. 29.

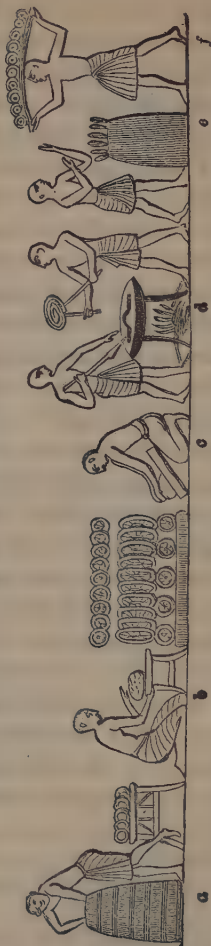
³ *Papyrus*, quoted by Ebers, p. 326.

⁴ *Königstochter*, vol. i. n. 39.

⁵ The drinking cups of the rich Egyptians were often very costly. They were made of gold, alabaster, fine-glazed clay, or glass, and were often of the most elegant shapes.

while underneath are the words, "They press grapes into the water, and the king drinks."¹

The dream of the chief baker is no less true to Egyptian life, even in its details. The "baskets of white bread,"² find their justification alike in the pictures and inscriptions and in the remains found in the tombs. The temples received tributes of wheat from the earliest times, and the kings at their coronation cut off some ears of standing grain, and presented them to the gods, as the chief product of the land. Mummy wheat is also found constantly in the oldest tombs, and, strange to say, it has been found in the lake dwellings of Switzerland, which it could hardly have reached except through Phenician traders at



EGYPTIAN BAKING.

a and *e* are ovens. *a* is being cleaned out. That at *e* is kindled and ready for use, the flames coming out at the top. Ovens of this shape are still used in the East, and bear the same name—Tannur—as in Gen. xv. 17. See p. 342. They are sometimes made of brickwork, at others of earthenware, daubed with mud or plaster to retain the heat. The one at *e* illustrates Gen. xv. 17, the words "a smoking furnace" there, being literally "a smoking Tannur." At *d* bread is being baked on a plate of metal or in an open hollow pan, a method so simple that it is still much used by the Arabs and others for the thin cakes which they commonly make. At *b* and *c* men are making dough into cakes, and at *f* a man is bearing the cakes or loaves on his head to the oven.

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 480. Naville, *Textes relatifs au mythe d'Horus*, pl. 21, 23.

² Proper translation. Joseph plays on the words "lift up." The head of the baker was "lifted up" in a very different sense from that of the "butler."

Marseilles.¹ Indeed, huge wheatfields are seen in the pictures of the Egyptian heaven.

Even so trifling a detail as the bakemeats being said to have been carried on the head, is no less true to Egyptian life, for while the monuments show that men carried their burdens less often on their heads than otherwise, bakers are a marked exception. A papyrus of the age when the Hebrews were in Egypt, names four of the Pharaoh's bakers, of whom one is always called "the chief," and the importance of his office may be judged from the fact that no fewer than 114,064 loaves are said to have been delivered by him at a particular time to the royal storerooms.² Strange to say, we have also a notice of the bread made in the citadel where Joseph was confined, for one text speaks of "the bread baked in the White Castle" at Memphis.

The doom of the baker, to be beheaded and then have his body stuck upon a pole and left to be eaten by the birds, was the hardest that could be inflicted on an Egyptian; and shows special guilt, real or alleged, on the part of the unfortunate victim. To let the body be destroyed was fatal to all hopes of a happy eternity, for its preservation was essential to a continued existence after death. Beheading, preceded by beating with sticks, was a common punishment; but refusal of embalmment was only pronounced against extraordinary offenders.³ To leave the body to be eaten by the dogs was the most terrible item in the punishment of the treacherous wife in the Tale of the Two Brothers.

The birthday of Pharaoh, on which the cup-bearer and the chief baker had their very different gaol discharge,

¹ Desor, *Pfahlbauten des Neuenburger Sees*, p. 43.

² Pleyte, *Le papyrus Rollin* (Paris, 1868).

³ Dillmann, p. 424. Ebers' *Ägypten*, p. 324.

was a great festivity on the Nile, for even to the common people the hour of birth, on which astrologers were always consulted where means allowed, was a time of supreme interest. Birthdays generally, were, among all classes in antiquity, kept with great rejoicing, especially those of kings. That of the king of Persia was known as the "perfect day," and an inscription of the time of the Exodus, tells us of Rameses II., that his birthday caused joy in heaven.¹ The priests of every class assembled in the temples, an amnesty was granted to prisoners, and a great feast was held, worthy of a monarch who was worshipped as a god by his subjects. Under colour of recalling the glories of the past year, the priesthood took the opportunity of renewing their hold on him by flattering but significant addresses; after which, surrounded by all his court and the dignitaries of the temples, he dispensed his grace or frowns as he thought fit.

The two dreams of Pharaoh are full of interest. The Nile, as elsewhere, is called only "the river,"² needing no other name in an Egyptian incident; just as the Euphrates is similarly honoured when the scene is in its neighbourhood.³ In the first dream, seven "well favoured and fat fleshed" buffaloes—the Egyptian sacred number—which had been wallowing in the shallow water of the river's edge, come to the "lip" of the stream, to feed on the succulent reeds and sedge of the marshy brink, in which cattle still delight; but only to be eaten up by seven others, "ill favoured and lean fleshed," which presently come up, after them, out of the river. The wheat of the second

¹ Eber's *Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 22, n. 40; vol. ii. p. 257. Chabas, *Inscriptions des Mines d'Or*, p. 3. Dillmann, p. 424.

² The Egyptian word meaning this is used.

³ See list of texts in Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, Appendix, p. 34.

dream, with seven ears on the one stalk, is the many eared variety, or mummy wheat, still grown in the Delta, and the east wind which blasted the second stalk and its ears, is the Khamsin, or burning south-east wind, which too often even at this day shrivels the growing corn, leaving it withered and empty. That it is said to blow from the east instead of the south-east is natural, for the Hebrews spoke only of "the four winds of the earth,"¹ and hence reckoned south-east as east, as the Greeks classed the east wind under the name of the southern, and the west under that of the north.

That the number of the cows should have been seven is a singular touch of true local colouring, recognised only within a few years, but affording a striking proof of the exactness of the whole incident in its illustration of Egyptian modes of thought and life. Isis is often seen associated with seven cows; a mystical number represented by the same word in Egyptian, Hebrew, and Sanscrit.² So, also, Osiris is at times represented as attended by seven cows, his wives.³ At the summer solstice a cow was led seven times round his temple. That those in the dream should have been bathing in the Nile is, moreover, only a reproduction of paintings often seen on the monuments.⁴

Want and abundance depend absolutely in Egypt, to-day, as of old, on the rise of the Nile. The culture of the land must ever go hand in hand with the irrigation of the soil by the periodical flood, which takes the place at once of rain and of manure. The yearly rise of the stream had, indeed, long before Joseph's day, been the direct source of Egyptian civilization; for the necessity of an

¹ Rev. vii. 1.

² Egyptian *Sefeh*, Hebrew *Seba*, Sanscrit *Sapt*.

³ De Rougé, *Revue Archæologique* (Feb., 1869), p. 94.

⁴ *Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 102.

extended system of canals, and of a supervision of the boundary marks of individual properties, often effaced by the inundations, first enforced attention to astronomy as the only guarantee of correct measurement of time ; and also to architecture and geometry, by the help of which strong dams could be built and a network of canals led off from the central stream. And it is a striking fact that the only part of the Egyptian religion received through the whole country, and not in some localities only—the worship of Isis and Osiris, with the gods and myths related to them—was closely connected with the phenomena of the Nile. In its rise it was called Osiris—the Fructifier of the Land—and was typified by the male ox ;¹ while in its overflow it bore the name of his wife and sister, Isis—the Fruitful Mother, or of Hathor,—the goddess of fruitfulness, both of whom were worshipped under the symbol of the cow, or with the head of a cow, as is constantly seen on the monuments. “Among the stars,” says Plutarch, “Sirius is consecrated to Isis, because it brings moisture. As the Nile, according to the Egyptians, is an emanation of Osiris, they believe also that their land is the body of Isis ; that is, the part of it enriched by the river when it overflows. From this union Horus is born, and this Horus is the season or the temperature of the air which quickens and nourishes all things.”² When, therefore, the kine rose out of the bed of the Nile, it was apparently almost inevitable to recognise in them the symbol of Isis-Hathor—that is, of the fertility of the land.

It is, indeed, striking to notice how thoroughly the Egyptian world realized its dependence on its great river. Fixed standards to note its periodical rise had in the earliest ages been set up in its course, from Nubia to the Delta ; and from these the people were wont, each summer,

¹ *Dillmann*, p. 426.

² *Isis et Osiris*.

to read their future. From December to the end of June no noticeable change took place in the stream, and the images of Isis-Hathor were draped in black, as mourning for the dryness of the soil. But for the seven months from July to December their images, in gala robes, were carried round, each month, in solemn procession, and all was rejoicing. At Memphis, Joseph's town, as elsewhere, the one great topic of each summer and autumn must have been the daily reports of the Nilometer of the city, which seems to have been especially noted; the estimates of the height of inundations which have come down to us from antiquity seeming to have been taken from it. In the time of Herodotus, some 1,300 years after Joseph, 26 feet of flood, only, were needed to secure a plentiful harvest; but the rise of the land, through the deposit of Nile mud, now requires that the waters reach a height of 39 feet to cause an adequate inundation;¹ a result effected by dams and barrage.

The second dream is only the complement of the first, and must have been full of meaning to a land like Egypt, which grew the heaviest wheat in the world, and yet often had fields of empty ears when the khamsin had been blowing; a land which believed that in Elysium, the blessed did not pass their existence in enervating rest, but rejoiced in richly watered cornfields which they themselves sowed and reaped; where the kings bore ears of wheat in their hands at high festivals; where crowns of wheat-ears were put on deified princesses; and where the harvest goddess could be spoken of as she who filled the garners with grain.²

¹ Brockhaus' *Lexicon*, art. Nil. Ebers (*Ägypten*, p. 355) says, that from 22 to 26 feet was the rise required in antiquity.

² Ebers' *Ägypten*, p. 360. *Eine Ägyptische Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 198. The Nile begins to rise at Memphis at the end of June,

The alarm of the Pharaoh at such dreams, followed by his summoning "all the magicians and wise men of Egypt," is true alike to the importance attached to dreams by the Egyptians, and to the arrangements of the court at Memphis. A council of priests of various orders were in constant attendance upon the king, to guide every act of his daily life, and to interpret the will of the gods; as shown in omens, visions, or signs of the heavens. Every large temple had its college of priests, over whom one presided as chief; and each class of the priesthood in these colleges had, under this head dignitary, a president of its own. From among the high priests, moreover, the foremost men were chosen as a hierarchy for all Egypt, and of these a selected number, the most eminent in dignity, lived in the royal palace to attend on the king; one, selected from them, acting apparently as sovereign pontiff of all Egypt.

When, however, weighty questions, such as that of these dreams, had to be solved, this standing council of high ecclesiastics, which seems to have been twenty in number, was augmented by the heads of the great temples throughout the country, and the united body were invited to aid the king in his perplexity. There were many classes of priests, but only two are named in Genesis¹ on this occasion—the Hachamim, or wise men; and the

and continues rising for three months. At the end of September it commences to retire, and the land dries during October, which is the month for sowing. The harvest begins with the opening of March, and the river keeps shrinking till the end of June, when it again rises. Brockhaus' *Lexicon*, vol. i. *Ægypten*, p. 356. Brugsch, however, says that the Nile begins to cover Lower Egypt with its waters in the two months of January and February. *Oriental Congress* (1874), p. 245.

¹ The words used in the Hebrew are the exact Egyptian terms

Hartunmim,¹ a title not yet very clear; but these are doubtless named as including the council as a whole. They did not affect to speak by direct inspiration in giving their interpretations, but confined themselves to consulting the holy books, and to performing magical rites; and deep, no doubt, would be the study of the one, and abundant the performance of the other, at such a crisis. That Joseph, after their failure, should have at once given so just a solution, without having any holy books, but in the far higher way of direct inspiration, explains the reverence in which he was forthwith held.

The recurrence of years of famine in Egypt, from a failure in the rise of the Nile, receives vivid corroboration from the monuments and inscriptions. Thus, in the tombs of Beni Hassan, Ameni, a high civil and military officer of King Usurtasen I. of the twelfth dynasty, under which it is generally thought Abraham visited Egypt, records of himself in posthumous praise, on the walls of his burial chamber: "For years I exercised my power as governor in the nome of Mah. All the works for the palace of the king were placed in my hands. The chiefs of the temples of the gods of the nome of Mah gave me thousands of *bulls (so)* with their calves. I was praised on the part of the royal palace because of the yearly delivery of cows in milk. I gave up all their products to the palace, and I kept back nothing for myself. The whole nome of Mah worked for me with multiplied activity. But I never afflicted the child of the poor. I have not ill-treated the widow. I never disturbed any owner of land. I never drove away the herdsmen. I never took away his *men* for my works from the master who had only five. There were none wretched in my time. The hungry did not exist in my time, *even when there were years of famine.*

¹ *Ges. Thes.*, col. i. p. 1194.

For, behold, I had all the fields of the district of Mah ploughed, up to its frontiers, both south and north. Thus I found bread for the inhabitants, and gave them the food which they produced. There were no hungry people in it. I gave equally to the widow and the married woman. I did not prefer a great personage to a humble man in all that I gave away; and when the inundations of the Nile were great, he who sowed was master of his crop. I kept back nothing for myself from the revenues of the field.”¹

“Years of famine” had thus scourged the land generations before those of the Pharaoh’s dreams; but an old inscription, whose author must, in the opinion of Brugsch, have been a contemporary of Joseph, brings before us, it may be, the very calamity to which the young Hebrew owed his wonderful change of fortune. One of the tombs at El Kuh has revealed this strange relic of the remote past, which is interesting on more grounds than one. On the wall opposite the entrance to the tomb, the dead man’s story proceeds:—“The chief at the table of princes, Baba, the risen-again, speaks thus: I loved my father, I honoured my mother; my brothers and my sisters loved me. I stepped out of the door of my house with a benevolent heart. I stood there with refreshing hand, and splendid were the preparations I collected for the feast-day. Mild was my heart, free from noisy anger. The gods bestowed on me a rich portion on earth. The city wished me health, and a life full of freshness. I punished the evil doers. The children who stood opposite me in the town,² during the days I lived, were, small as well as great, sixty; there were prepared for them as many beds, as many chairs, as many tables. They consumed

¹ Brugsch’s *History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 137.

² His own family.

120 epha of doura,¹ the milk of 3 cows, 52 goats and 9 she asses ; a hin of balsam, and 2 jars of oil.

"My speech may appear untrue to some, but I call to witness the god Month that it is true. I had all this prepared in my house. In addition, I gave cream in the pantry and beer in the cellar in a more than sufficient number of hin measures.

"I collected the harvest, for I was a friend of the harvest god. I was watchful at the time of sowing, and now *when a famine arose, lasting many years, I issued corn to the city to each hungry person.*"²

Such famines, extending through a number of consecutive seasons, owing to the deficiency of water in the Nile, were very rare ; indeed, history knows only the instance related in Genesis ; and hence, as he whose story has been quoted was a contemporary of Joseph, we seem to have here an independent notice of the very dearth connected with his narrative.

The hasty summons of Joseph from the prison, at the suggestion of the cup-bearer, to interpret the Pharaoh's dreams, is no less true to Egyptian customs than the rest of the narrative. Notwithstanding the urgency, he had to "shave himself," and change his garments, before he could "come in unto Pharaoh ;" a necessity explained by the fact that no one could appear before the majesty of Egypt unless he were, in all respects, ceremonially clean ; which included the shaving of the whole body, careful bathing, and a perfectly clean suit of raiment.

¹ Dhourra, still a common food in Africa, is a kind of millet. It is only given in this country to birds ; but is often used, when ground, to make sweet cakes, in Egypt and elsewhere. It is a kind of cultivated grass, and it is grown in the Holy Land for use as bread. *Tristram*, p. 470.

² Brugsch, vol. i. pp. 263-4.

The duty he was to perform was, besides, a priestly one, and the very word for priest, in Egyptian, means "the pure" or "clean." All priests were required to be absolutely hairless, as a part of their purity, the only exception being when they were mourning for death; and, indeed, all Egyptians who wished to be "clean" were required to undergo the same strange purification.¹ Wigs were, therefore, worn by priests and laymen alike, to cover the smoothly shaven skull, and false beards were equally common; an unshorn chin marking a foreigner or a person of humble position or doubtful life. The great masses of hair we see on the heads of priests and kings in the paintings are, hence, only the triumphs of art, and the formal beards on the statues are equally artificial. Joseph would be required to submit to this priestly law; for the ghostly council round Pharaoh, who himself had to be admitted into the priestly caste before he could ascend the throne, dictated every particular of his daily life, and insisted on their rules being carried out to the least detail by every one who approached him. The repeated washing of the whole person before an audience could be granted, was no less imperative, and clothes fresh from the washers must be put on. We read, in fact, of the "washermen" of Pharaoh and of their "chief;" a dignitary of no mean rank in a country where the rules of ceremonial purity were so exacting. Joseph must have exchanged the simple blouse which he, like all other common people, wore in prison, for rich garments, provided for him, before he entered the chamber of presence.²

¹ *Herod.*, ii. 37, 41, 47, 77.

² *Riehm*, p. 761. *Dillmann*, p. 427. A letter of a scribe which has survived, describing the troubles of each position of life, says: "The barber shaves even till night. He has no rest except

It was no light matter for one outside the priestly caste to venture to interpret a dream, much less that of the Pharaoh; for a slave who busied himself with the secret knowledge reserved by the hierarchy to themselves, was liable to death. It must, therefore, have been an anxious moment for Joseph, when he waited to see how his interpretation was received; but its correctness was so instantly apparent, and the policy recommended so sound and shrewd, that the result was not for a moment doubtful. With the suddenness of despotic countries, the slave of the moment before found himself raised to be Grand Vizier of the whole land. Pharaoh and his court, recognising, as they did, the interpretation of dreams as a divine gift, and tracing all insight into the future as sent from above, could have no one so fit to put in the highest authority as a man thus inspired.

He was therefore set at once over both palace and nation; the whole population being placed under his orders;¹ the only honour reserved by Pharaoh for himself being that he occupied the throne. The formal investiture is illustrated in each particular by the monuments. The royal signet-ring transferred from the hand of the Pharaoh to that of Joseph was his warrant, as prime minister of the land; clothing of fine cotton and linen,² the dress of the

when he eats. He goes from house to house to seek custom. He wears out his arms to fill his stomach." *Maspero*, p. 123. A bronze razor, preserved in the Louvre, is of the same shape as ours, and its edge is still keen. De Rougé, *Notice des Monuments Egyptiens* (1855), p. 78. To be called bald was an insult among the Jews (2 Kings ii. 23).

¹ *Dillmann*, p. 428. The above is the sense of Gen. xli. 40.

² The word includes both. The delicacy of the best Egyptian linen may be judged from the fact, that whereas the finest linen in India—the finest now in the world—has only 100 threads in an inch of the warp and 84 in the woof, that of Egypt has at

priests, the highest class in Egypt, marked his adoption into the priestly order; and the special golden neck-chain put on him was the official sign to all, of his authority.¹ Forthwith, the second royal chariot, set at his disposal, carries him through the streets of Memphis, to make known his elevation; heralds running before it with the cry, Abrek, abrek—"bow the knee," "cast yourselves down" before him.² The Arabs, strange to say, still use the cry, Abrok, when they are about to alight from their camels or asses.³

The new Egyptian name given to Joseph has received special illustration from Brugsch. He reads it Zap-u-nt-p-aa-Auk,⁴ which is not far from the Psonthomphanēk of

times 140 in the warp and about 64 in the woof. *Wilkinson*, vol. ii. p. 77.

¹ Gesenius aptly says *the Chain*, as we say *the Order*. *Thesaurus*, p. 361.

² The words, Gen. xli. 40, "According unto thy word shall all my people be ruled," are literally, "thy mouth shall all the people kiss." The phrase, perhaps, comes from the practice in the East of kissing anything received from a superior, and pressing it to the forehead, to imply obedience at the risk of life. See Rosenmüller, *Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 192; also Gesenius, *Thesaurus*, p. 923 b; and Wilkinson's *Anct. Egypt.*, vol. ii. p. 203. But in ancient Egypt it was, in effect, the designation to supreme office, for the title of "the grand mouth" was that of a high functionary of the Pharaohs. We read of one who was "grand mouth to the whole land," and as such, the officer to whom all authority was confided. And in the same way, when Set-Nekt wished to give Rameses III. a share in his power, he raised him to the dignity of "grand mouth of the land of Egypt."*

³ Chabas, *Études sur l'Antiquité historique*, pp. 408-412.

⁴ Brugsch notices that the name in the Bible, Zaphnatpaneakh, corresponds "letter for letter" with this. Rosenmüller and others explain it as a pompous title, meaning "Saviour of the

* Chabas, *Récherches sur la XIX. Dynastie*.

the Greek Bible; and translates it as meaning, in the mode used by the Greeks of the age of the Ptolemies, "the nomarch of the Sethroitic nome;" that is, of the district in the extreme north-east of Egypt. In the mouth of an Egyptian of Joseph's time, however, he tells us, it was equivalent to "the governor of the abode of Him who lives," and he explains this as a reference to the god Ankh, with whose name that conferred on Joseph concludes. This deity, we are told, was the same as the god Thom, who had splendid temples at On and Heliopolis, close to Memphis, and was also the tutelar god of Succoth, in Joseph's new district. Ankh, however, was especially the god of the town of Pi-Thom, and bore the name of the "great God"—the word Ankh itself meaning "Life"—"He who lives," or "the Living (one)." Can it be that this is an unconscious recognition of the true God, lingering still in Egypt, as it had survived in Abraham's day, in the instances of Abimelech and Melchisedek, in Canaan? As Brugsch says: "It is the only time a like name for a god, which appears to exclude the idea of idolatry, is met with in Egyptian texts." Nor would it be strange if it actually referred to Jehovah, since the eastern side of the Delta had for ages been more or less peopled by Semitic settlers, or wandering shepherds; who might well have brought with them the holy tradition of the Living God, which was still faintly acknowledged in their first seat, beyond the Euphrates. That Joseph should have been set specially over a district of which the tutelary god was "the Living One," is, at least, noteworthy. It is singular, moreover, to find that a serpent, to which the Egyptian texts gives the title "the magni-

world," but the Egyptians called Egypt "the world." *Ges. Thes.*, p. 1181 b. *Das A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 195. *Dillmann*, p. 229. *Congress of Orientalists* (1874), p. 269.

ficent," "the splendid," was the living symbol of Ankh, for this seems to transport us to the scene in the desert, when Moses was told to make the brazen serpent, and to connect itself with the fond superstition which made Israel burn incense to that sacred relic, till Hezekiah put down this serpent worship by destroying its object.¹

Joseph himself tells us that his elevation had made him an Ab en Pirao²—which is wrongly translated in our version—"a father to Pharaoh," and that he was "Lord³ of all his house." The former title is a strictly Egyptian one, and is often found in the ancient papyri, as that conferred on the supreme officials of the court. Several of the texts preserved in the British Museum, written by the sacred scribes and officers of the Pharaohs, allude to these Ab en Pirao; their high rank being vividly shown by the profound respect with which they are mentioned. An illustrious marriage alone was now required to make the dignities of the new favourite complete, and this was presently arranged by the Pharaoh himself. Asenath, "devoted to Neith," the daughter of Potipherah, "devoted to the sun god," a priest of the great university temple of the Sun at On, close to Memphis, became his wife, and thus he was finally incorporated into the highest class in the land, the priesthood.

The Pharaoh under whom Joseph was thus advanced is believed by most scholars to have been one of the foreign race, known as the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, who for a long period held sway in Egypt, after they had

¹ Brugsch, in *Congress of Orientalists* (1874), p. 269. *History* vol. ii. p. 349.

² Gen. xlv. 8.

³ Lord = *Adōn*, a Semitic word adopted by the Egyptians as the title of the "captain of a district;" then, for the chief officer of a palace. *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 221.

overthrown the native dynasty. Canon Cook thinks, indeed, Joseph was brought to the Nile before their successful invasion, while Lepsius would place his arrival under Sethi I., the Sesostris of the Greeks, the first native ruler after their expulsion, some centuries later. But the weight of probability seems to point to his having found the Hyksos already on the throne, when he was sold to Potiphar; the friendly relations of the court to his family, contrasted with the changed bearing to his descendants, appearing to suit better with the later Hyksos period, as followed by the revolution which drove out the Shepherd Kings, than with any other.¹

The strange story of these Semitic invaders must be left to a future chapter, but one or two points fall properly to be noticed here. Joseph seems to have been brought to Egypt about 1730 years before Christ,² and tradition has assigned the period of his glory to the reign of the Shepherd King, Aphobis,³ who preceded the revolution which expelled his race by only a few years. Like other Asiatics, he had imported and promoted the worship of a favourite god. The Semitic immigration, which for ages had prevailed in the eastern part of the Delta, and had, indeed, made it possible for the Hyksos to seize the Egyptian throne, by the gradual preponderance in that region of warlike tribes of their race, had also led to a gradual blending of the customs, and even of the religions, of the Egyptians and of these foreigners. Syrian idols were introduced and largely worshipped, in the end even, by the native population, and of these Sutech was the chief.⁴ This deity the Hyksos chose as the supreme

¹ Joseph, in *Riehm*. *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 264. *Maspero*, p. 174.

² *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 260. *Maspero*, p. 174.

³ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 260.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

god of their newly-acquired country, building at Zoan, Tanis, and Avaris, grand temples to him, adorned with sphinxes, a strange human-faced animal form introduced by them—and rejecting the worship of any other god of the land.¹ This Sutech, or Set, known also as Nub, or “the golden,” was simply the Syrian god Baal, or more particularly, Baal Zapuna, the Baal-Zephon, or god of “the North Wind”² of Scripture, if Brugsch be correct.³ In this Sutech, no less eminent an authority than Dr. Birch has recognised “the One only and true God, as distinct from all other deities;” but this attractive fancy has, it is to be feared, little to support it. On the contrary, Sutech-Baal, appears in Egypt as the principle of Evil, the enemy of light and of good in the seen and unseen worlds.⁴ He seems, in fact, to have been the same as Baal-Typhon,⁵—with which, indeed, the name Zephon sounds very much alike,—and if so, he was pre-eminently the god of darkness and of evil, to whom the unfruitful sea, the wild desert, and the storm were the congenial home. His idol was painted red, and human sacrifices were offered to it.⁶ After the Hyksos were expelled, we find the dynasty of Rameses adopting this repulsive worship, but with the change of honouring Sutech as the god of victory; which he already was, in one aspect, among the Hittites of Syria.⁷ But the popular estimate of his attributes is better seen, in his having the hideous river horse, or hippopotamus ascribed to him as his sacred emblem, and in the myth of his being destroyed at last in this form by the god Horus, or Light, in the

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 239.

² Ebers’ *Durch Gosen*, p. 511.

³ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 242.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁵ Ebers’ *Durch Gosen*, p. 510.

⁶ Plutarch, *Isis et Os.*, 32

⁷ See his name as the god of many Canaanite cities, in the treaty made by them with Rameses II. *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 72.

shape of the winged disk of the sun.¹ The idea of his representing Jehovah worship must, therefore, we fear, be abandoned, however pleasant it would have been to have recognised in the friend of Joseph a worshipper of the God of the Hebrews.

Twelve or thirteen years had passed since Joseph was "stolen from the land of the Hebrews," but he had now reached the height of prosperity, after vicissitudes such as could only happen in an Eastern despotism. He was still a young man of thirty, and found himself a member of the royal order of the priesthood, with the chain of high office round his neck, and the signet ring of the Pharaoh on his hand—the virtual ruler of the greatest country of the then known world.² Two sons born to him helped to efface the bitter memories of the past—Manasseh, "he who makes me forget" my sorrow; and Ephraim, "double fruitfulness," for "God had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction." With his policy in reference to the famine, it is hard, however, entirely to agree; for though the impost of twenty per cent. laid by him on the produce of the land might not be oppressive in a country so rich as Egypt, it seems, to modern notions at least, very hard to have forced the peasantry to sell their property of every kind, and even their liberty, for food, before this arrangement was made.³

¹ Ebers' *Durch Gosen* p. 510.

² *Ægyp. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 232.

³ The taxes in Turkey are 50 per cent. of the produce, and in Persia 75 per cent. *Dillmann*, p. 459. In chap. xlvii. 21, the Sept., Sam. and Vulg. read thus: "As for the people, he made slaves of them," etc. A parallel to the elevation of Joseph has been detected by some in that of Sineha, the fugitive Egyptian who, after having risen to greatness among the Amu, returned to Egypt, and was greatly honoured by the reigning Pharaoh. But he was an Egyptian, not a Semite. (*Records of the Past*, vol.

That the sons of Jacob should have gone down to Egypt for corn when the famine began to press, marks a great progress from the time when Abraham had himself, with all his tribe, to move to the Nile under similar circumstances. Trade in corn had apparently not then been established between Canaan and Egypt; now it appears in full operation. Joseph, so long lost, is naturally not recognised in his Egyptian splendour and in his change from youth to manhood, but his brethren still wear the old dress of shepherds, and are easily remembered. Amidst them, however, there is no Benjamin. Have they murdered or sold Rachel's only other child, his one full brother? Alike to make them feel something of the anguish they had once caused himself, and to discover the truth as to his brother, Joseph could have taken no better course than to charge them with being spies. An invasion from the north-east was the standing danger of Egypt, to ward off which the eastern

vi. p. 131.) An inscription in the Museum of Turin furnishes a curious illustration of Joseph's history, in at least one particular. It is the funeral record of one Beka—"The Overseer of the Public Granaries, and Controller of Upper and Lower Egypt." The name Beka means "servant," or "slave." He preserved the favour of the king to the last. The inscription tells his own opinions of his virtues and is interesting on many grounds. He had been just and true, and without malice. From his birth to his death he had always been truthful. "So I have heard," says he naïvely. Love to his father and mother dwelt in his heart, nor had he ever forgotten his obligations to them from his tenderest childhood. Living in the court he had gained the affection alike of the king and of his courtiers. Strange to say, there are no allusions to the gods of Egypt, in his inscription, such as are generally the staple of such compositions. He seems to have had a simple creed—to have God in his heart, and to seek to know and follow His commands.*

* Chabas, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. pp. 459, 464.

border of Egypt had been defended by the great fortified wall, from Suez to the Mediterranean; as China has been protected from the Tartars in a similar way. One, at least, must be left behind, a prisoner; while they go back with corn, and return, bringing their younger brother. That Joseph should swear by the life of Pharaoh, is strictly Oriental. The Egyptian king was worshipped as a god, and an oath by his life, like that of the Persians "by the king's head," would be reckoned more binding than any other. Strangely enough, the form was still in use in Egypt in the twelfth century, under the Caliphs, and was regarded as equivalent to pledging one's own life on his keeping his oath; for to break it was death.¹ Egyptian was spoken at court even under the Hyksos, so that an interpreter was required, and in the end nine of the brethren are allowed to return; Simeon, the second eldest, being left in prison as a hostage, rather than Reuben, the eldest, whose kind feeling in seeking, long before, to save his brother's life was thus remembered.

The gifts sent with Benjamin to the unknown dignitary at Pharaoh's Court, to win his favour, mark an Eastern custom still in force, never to approach the great without a present. But nothing could well be simpler than the offering of Jacob, of "the best fruits," or, as the word means, "the song" of the land—a little balm from Gilead, or rather from the hot valley of Jericho, a little *dëbash*, or thickened syrup of grapes,² some gum tragacanth, some gum of the *cistus* or *ladanum*, some pistacio nuts

¹ *Rosenmüller*, vol. i. p. 201. *Michaelis*, vol. v. p. 217.

² Not honey of bees, but what the Arabs still call *dibs*, a thickened syrup of grapes, still a great favourite in Egypt, to which three hundred camels' loads of it are sent each year from Hebron.*

* *Delitzsch*, *Die Genesis*, vol. ii. p. 106.

from the terebinth tree, and some almonds. Cultivated fruits had not, apparently, as yet been grown in Canaan, so that only natural products could be offered.¹ The grief of Jacob at losing Rachel's only remaining child, the eager pledges of Reuben and Judah to bring him back safely, and the double money to pay for the last and the present food, are natural touches that speak to the heart even now. But a new chapter in the strange drama was about to open, for on reaching Egypt, with Benjamin, they were presently invited to the great man's palace.

The mansions of noble Egyptians stood within high walls, decorated with paintings; the entrance being by a huge gate, flanked at each side by lofty poles, from which floated long streamers. The gate opened on a wide paved court-yard, along the sides of which ran covered walks, supported on slender, painted wooden columns. A second high doorway at the back of this court led into the vast gardens of the mansion, with rows of fruit trees and trellised vines, clumps of shrubs, beds of flowers, and of vegetables. Palms, sycamores, and acacia trees, figs, pomegranates, and jasmine, grew in luxuriance; a large tank in the middle of the grounds supplying abundant water for the roots of the trees and for the plants, and numerous gardeners seeing that all were duly cared for, and that the canals, which led the water from the Nile, were kept full by the labours of oxen, which turned water-wheels into them day and night.

At one side of this paradise rose the mansion, sometimes of vast extent but only of one storey high, at others of several storeys. Almost all the rooms on the ground floor had separate doors, opening into a verandah, supported by coloured wooden columns, and running the

¹ Tristram, *Nat. Hist.*, pp. 336, 362, 365, 393, 410, 458.

whole length of the garden side of the house. A long row of storerooms, running at a right angle to this, closed the view behind, and hid away the garden produce, the wine jars, and the larder of the establishment.¹ The outside of the mansion, like the enclosing wall, was decorated with paintings or ornamental designs.

The furniture was in keeping with this exterior. Couches, sofas, and lounges, often of precious woods encrusted with ebony or ivory and set off with gilding, showed exquisite artistic skill in their fanciful shapes, like those of lions, sphinxes, horses, and other animals, and by their elaborate carving; and there was a profusion of tables of all sizes and designs, and elegantly carved chairs, of different kinds—at times of ivory, but always costly and beautiful. On the sideboard, tables, and consoles, stood artistically-worked Syrian drinking vessels of many forms: beautiful vases of gold, bronze, rock crystal or other precious material, filled with flowers, were everywhere; rare perfumes rose from alabaster cups, and the foot sank in the thick pile of the carpets that covered the floors,² or trod on the skins of lions and other ferocious beasts.

The attendance was appropriately magnificent. Troops of slaves and officials ministered to every real or imaginary want of their lord. A band of priests took charge of the religious rites of the household, supported by scribes and astrologers. A confidential slave reigned over all the more private details of the establishment; his authority marked, as he daily went his rounds, by the curved baton of office which he carried. There were storekeepers,

¹ Ebers' *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 123.

² *Uarda*, p. 137. *Eine Ägyptische Königstochter*, vol. i. pp. 14, 206. *Vigouroux*, vol. ii. p. 121. *Wilkinson*, vol. ii. pp. 136 ff. *Lepsius, Denkmäler*, vol. ii. p. 102.

chair-bearers, basket-makers, gardeners, bailiffs, glass-blowers, gold-workers, tailors, barbers, shepherds, porters, hunters, fishermen, men for taking charge of the road; washermen in numbers, under a head washerman, to take charge of the linen; carpenters, potters, woodcutters, bakers, and many more. Female slaves spun the flax into thread, prepared the skeins, and finally wove the linen of the household; and a whole multitude of others of both sexes had duties either outside the mansion or within it. The acrobat and the dancer, the harpist and the singer, and many others, strove to while away the dulness of their lord's evenings. His chief glory, however, was in his farm, with its flocks and herds, his household, with its throng of slaves and artizans, and in his luxurious yachts on the sacred river. The use of the horse had been introduced by the Hyksos, and doubtless in Joseph's day high dignitaries already boasted of their studs and chariots. The cat purred at the great man's hearth, the dog ran at his side, and he amused himself with pet apes. Oxen of different kinds fed in his meadows, and he hunted the gazelle and the antelope. Goat, veal, and beef, varied by hyæna, graced his table, but he shuddered like a Jew at the idea of pork, and cared little for mutton. Ducks, geese, doves, and pigeons, wild and tame, were as common as now, and domestic fowl abounded on every side. His bread was generally of barley, varied by biscuits and pastry. Grapes, figs, and dates furnished his desserts; and wine and beer his drink. Dressed in pure white linen, he wore only sandals or walked barefoot; but gold collars, bracelets and anklets, showed his wealth, and he carried a wand for dignity.

Accustomed to the simple life of the tent, the splendour of such a dignitary must have awed his shepherd brothers, but their wonder, dashed with fear, must

have been deepened when they were invited to eat with him ; for the state of an Egyptian Grand Vizier was something of which till then they could have had no idea. The dining chamber was a decorated hall, resplendent with colour and gilding, and furnished with regal magnificence.

Slaves laid garlands of roses round the shoulders of the guests, and put wreaths of lotus blossoms on their heads, while others handed them wine and food from sideboards loaded with every delicacy and decked with flowers. Choirs of musicians during the dessert entered the chamber and played on harps, lutes, small drums and flutes, the conductor beating time with his hands, and the company joining with measured clappings,¹ while female dancers added to their delight.² It may be that Joseph, though he had adopted Egyptian manners, avoided compliance with some particulars, but, as a whole, the iron force of prescription in so formal a country would doubtless make his mansion very much like that of others of his rank.

The delight of Joseph at the sight of Benjamin is heightened by the proof it gives that his brothers have not at least been guilty of a double crime. With true Eastern haste the creatures to be eaten at noon are cooked at once on being killed ; water is brought to each guest that he may wash his feet, as Egyptian politeness demanded ;³ the brethren bow themselves to the earth in Eastern fashion before the great man when he appears, having first made ready their gift to present to him. Joseph's eating at a table apart, as required by his priestly caste and high dignity, which would not allow him to eat with the laity ; the placing another table

¹ *Uarda*, vol. ii. pp. 80-96. ² *Vigouroux*, vol. ii. p. 127.

³ *Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 76.

for his Egyptian guests, who, though not of priestly rank, could not sit with "unclean" foreigners, are true to the old life they depict. Egypt was the Japan or China of early antiquity; shut out from intercourse with other countries as much as possible, and regarding their people, however cultured, as impure barbarians. The priests would eat or drink nothing that came from abroad, and, like the Hindoos with Europeans now, no Egyptian would use a dish or knife that had been touched by a foreigner.¹

Joseph's sending food from his table² to his brethren, and marking his favour for Benjamin by honouring him with a succession of special delicacies, was characteristic of antiquity. In the same way Ulysses is honoured at a feast with the long chine of a white-toothed swine, and so also is Ajax;³ and guests of Orientals, where specially welcome, are similarly distinguished to the present day.

The mixture of kindness and the reverse, in Joseph's subsequent act of again filling the sacks of his brethren with wheat and returning their money; but at the same time putting his "divining bowl" into the sack of Benjamin; appears to have its only explanation in the desire to test in some decisive way the feeling which the ten sons of other mothers bore to the one of their number dearest to him as the son of Rachel; a result on which, doubtless, his future treatment of them depended. That he should have a divining bowl at all, is, however, out of keeping with his simple faith in the God of his

¹ *Strabo*, xvii. 1, 6. *Herod.*, ii. 41.

² Kings and priests ate flesh in Egypt, daily, if they liked. (*Herod.*, ii. 37, 77.) The priests, however, abstained from mutton and pork, and some of them, like the Brahmins, were vegetarians. *Dillmann*, p. 440. *Michaelis*, vol. iv. p. 183.

³ *Odys.*, xiv. 437. *Ilias*, vii. 321.

father, in reverence towards whom he had, as a child, seen all such idolatrous and superstitious associations buried with contempt, beneath the terebinths of Shechem. But in so early an age, and amidst such a religious system as that of Egypt, entire superiority to superstition must have been difficult, while it might well consist with substantial fidelity to his hereditary faith, for when has superstition not found some hold even in the later ages of the Church?

The practice of divining by bowls of water or other fluid is of immemorial antiquity, and was widely spread, for we find traces of it in ancient India, Greece, Rome, and Egypt, as well as among the Hebrews, in this case of Joseph. Some terra cotta vases in the British Museum, brought from Babylonia, and written over, inside, with magical spells, may perhaps even show, in the mixture of Hebrew, Rabbinical and Chaldee words in these incantations, that such a form of divination obtained among the Eastern dispersion to a late period.

The word used by Joseph's steward for divining is itself peculiar, meaning as it does, "to utter a low, whispering, hissing sound," and hence "to practise enchantment by uttering magic spells,"¹ which sorcerers did in whispers and mutterings. The name "kondu," given in the Greek Bible for the bowl is also curious, for it has become naturalized in Arabic and Persian, and was the very word for the mystical saucers or dishes, in the shape of an Egyptian lotus flower, used by the ancient Indian priests in religious ceremonies, and also in Egypt itself, at the beginning of the third century of our era for similar purposes. Indeed, Norden,

¹ "Nahash." It is used twice in Gen. xlv. 5, 15, and also, by Laban, Gen. xxx. 27. The name for a serpent, from its hissing, is Nahash.

the German traveller,¹ tells us that he saw a kind of fortune telling there, last century, by dishes of water, and Lane, in his "Modern Egyptians,"² describes a form of pretended sorcery by looking into a drop of ink lying in the palm of the hand, as surviving still.

The modes in which these bowls were used in ancient times were doubtless various. One was by filling them with water and then putting into it small plates of silver or gold, or precious stones, with the likeness of the inquirer on them, the answer being reckoned good or bad according as the image was refracted on the surface.³ Another was, by fastening a ring to a thread and hanging it over the water in the bowl, the oracle revealing itself by the taps of the ring on this or that part of the bowl, and also by their frequency or strength.⁴ These were the modes known to Pliny. Psellus, a great theological writer of the Greek Church,⁵ tells us that "divination by bowls was invented by the Assyrians, whose cleverness (in the use of them) was extreme." "The bowl was filled

¹ Norden's *Voyage d'Égypte et de Nubie* (1752-55), vol. iii. p. 98. Norden says he had sent to the local dignitary with the usual presents, to ask protection and to show the firman of the Porte as his authority for wishing to visit the country. But the envoy was met by the answer, strikingly like that of Joseph to his brethren: "The firman of the Porte is nothing to me. I am, in this part, myself the Grand Seignior. I know already what kind of folks you are. *I have consulted my cup, and I find you are those of whom our prophets have spoken—Frenchmen in disguise, who would come, and by small gifts and pleasant insinuating manners, go about everywhere, examine the state of the country; leave in the end to report at home, and finally return with a multitude of other Frenchmen, to conquer the land and kill us all.*"

² Vol. ii. p. 362. Lenormant says he has seen this at Aleppo.

³ Dillmann, p. 442.

⁴ *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. pp. 114-117.

⁵ Born A.D. 1020; died A.D. 1106.

with water, which was made susceptible of prophetic inspiration by ceremonies and incantations used over it. This inspiration or divine force comes from the earth and has only a partial action. When it enters the water it makes a sound which the diviners cannot interpret, but, when it spreads through the contents of the bowl, other confused sounds are heard, from which the knowledge of the future is drawn. This force, or breath, derived from the material world, has always an uncertain or obscure character, as if sent on purpose to help the diviners, by making it impossible at any time to convict them of deception."¹

Delivered, by Joseph's self-disclosure to them, from their fear of slavery as the punishment for the apparent theft of the divining bowl, the future removal of his brethren with their father to Egypt is speedily arranged. Judah's offer to remain as a slave in place of Benjamin, the seeming offender, and the touching pathos with which he tells the story of Jacob's agony of soul for fear of this last remembrance of Rachel vanishing from him as Joseph had done, had shown that they are loyal to his brother, and overpowered him by tender recollections. Egyptian baggage and transport waggons are at their service, and they need not be anxious about bringing all their household stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is theirs. In Eastern fashion, they are dismissed with gifts of costly clothing² to wear on high days and great occasions;³ the ten receiving each a suit, but Benjamin, his mother's son, five, with three hundred

¹ Quoted by Lenormant, *La Divination*, p. 80. Ephrem Syrus. *Opera omnia*, (Rome, 1737,) vol. i. p. 100.

² Not "changes of clothing," but lit. "clothes to change," i.e., to wear on grand days, instead of their common ones.

³ Gen. xxvii. 15. Judges xiv. 12, 19. 2 Kings v. 22.

shekels of silver besides. "Ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat," for the use of his father on the way, complete the present. The representation on the walls of the tombs of Beni Hassan, of the presentation of the Amu, or Semitic strangers, to a high officer of Pharaoh, described on an earlier page, may help to bring before the mind, the appearance of the Hebrew immigrants.¹

Once more, then, in the Providence of God, the face of the chosen people is turned to the Nile; this time to find there a kindly shelter in which to grow strong enough to return, centuries later, not as a tribe, but as a nation. Slowly driving their flocks before them, Jacob and his encampment, numbering about seventy souls² connected with him by blood, but also a great multitude of slaves and dependents destined to be ultimately merged in the community, passed over the uplands of the South to Beersheba, the home and sanctuary of his fathers. There, as was fitting at such a time, sacrifices are offered to "El," the God of Isaac, and a vision of the night removes any remaining fear respecting the leaving Canaan. The days of his long sorrow for his lost son are at last over, and he can look forward to having his eyes closed by him, when his life is ended.³

Goshen,⁴ the district on the north-east of Egypt, at last reached, Joseph sets forth in his chariot, with due retinue, to "go up" from the lower lying Memphis, to

¹ Page 360. See also Birch, *Egypt from the Monuments*, pp. 65-67.

² Seventy-five in the Septuagint, counting in five descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. Exod. i. 5. Num. xxvi. 28-37. Deut. x. 22 (Sept.). Acts vii. 14.

³ Arabs still go to Egypt, in bad years, to live till better times come. Hitzig, *Geschichte*, p. 56.

⁴ Goshen is derived by Hitzig from the Persian, Gauzen—a cow. *Geschichte*, etc., p. 60.

see his father's face once more. "And Joseph presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck much and long,¹ and Israel said unto Joseph, Now, let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

By dexterous arrangement, permission is soon obtained from Pharaoh that the new comers should settle in the land of Goshen, as a district suited for pasture; and where they would be apart from the Egyptians, by whom foreign shepherd tribes were greatly disliked, at least while they remained nomadic; though native shepherds were numerous in the Nile valley. Indeed, Egypt abounded in cattle and flocks,² and Pharaoh himself had herds;³ the monuments showing multitudes of asses, cattle, sheep and goats, both royal and of private ownership. Woollen clothing was doubtless forbidden to be worn on visits to the temples, or by the priests, or for the wrappings of the dead; mutton was prohibited to both kings and priests, only beef, veal and geese being allowed to be eaten by them; and goats and sheep could be offered as sacrifices only in a few districts.⁴ Yet mutton was eaten in some parts, and the Egyptian shepherd caste lived freely among the people; swineherds only seeming to have been especially despised. The hatred of foreign free shepherd tribes had doubtless been intensified by the domination of the Shepherd Kings, and even under one of them, as the Pharaoh of Joseph may be supposed to have been, local customs and prejudices could not be treated so lightly as to permit actual nomades, such as those of Jacob's encampment, to enter the cultivated districts. The Pharaoh himself, however, we are told, was pleased to find among them

¹ Literally.

² Gen. xlvii. 6.

³ Gen. xlvii. 17.

⁴ *Herod.*, ii. 42, 46.

men accustomed to cattle, and chose from them chief herdsmen for his own stock. How vast that must have been, we can imagine from the bounty of Rameses III. to the temples, which amounted in the single instance of that of Thebes to no fewer than 91,223 cattle of different kinds, and in that of Heliopolis, to an additional 45,540.¹

The interview of Jacob with the mighty Pharaoh is no less artless in its pathos than other parts of the narrative. It is natural to ask an old man his age, and as natural that the answer should be a comment on the life so nearly over. And so it was with the king. With touching dignity and simplicity Jacob speaks as one at the end of his career. In comparison with the lives of his fathers, its one hundred and thirty years had been short; for Abraham had lived one hundred and seventy-five years, and Isaac one hundred and eighty; and it had been "evil," for he thinks of the long and hard service he had had with Laban, and the troubles he had had in his household—the loss of Rachel and of Joseph, among others. It had indeed been a "pilgrimage," for life is that in any case, but still more truly in his—the dweller in tents, wandering hither and thither with his flocks, through all the past, and now in his last days entering a third land as his home. Appropriately, he leaves the presence of the Pharaoh, after asking for him an old man's blessing.

¹ *Harris Papyrus. Records of the Past*, vol. vi. pp. 36, 38, 47, 59. The history of Menephtah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, offers us a striking analogy to the permission granted Jacob and his sons to settle in Egypt. A Papyrus informs us, that under his reign, Shasu or Semites came to Egypt from Idumea, to pasture their flocks at Pa-thum, or Pithom, in the grazing land belonging to the king, and received permission from the king to establish themselves on it.*

* *The Papyrus Anastasi.*

The last scene of the patriarch's life—his dying blessing on his sons—will be better considered hereafter; but the unwavering faith in the Divine promise of Canaan shines out strongly, in the command that he should be buried beside Abraham and Isaac in the cave at Machpelah. "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people. And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him."

As an adopted Egyptian, Joseph naturally honoured his father by a costly embalming, the greatest desire of any Egyptian heart; from the universal belief that the fate of the soul depended on the preservation of the body. As first Minister of State, and a high dignitary of the priestly caste, he had physicians in his service, for Egypt was rich in them, as a special order of the priesthood. The corpse would be carried to the spacious embalming houses outside the city, and left there forty days in the hands of those set apart to this dismal art. Thirty days more had to pass before the mourning was over,—making seventy in all, only two less than for a king,¹ and then the wish of the dead could be fulfilled, by carrying him to Canaan. The days of mourning had seen Joseph's household abstaining from all amusements and luxuries, the bath, wine, fine dishes or rich clothing: Joseph's beard and hair had been suffered to grow, and he had worn the special mourning dress.² If the funeral procession, at least in its starting from Memphis or On, was in other respects like that of a high Egyptian, it may even now be restored in fancy from the pictures on some of the tombs; but idolatrous details are so mixed

¹ *Wilkinson*, vol. ii. p. 374. *Diod.*, i. 72.

² *Wilkinson*, vol. ii. p. 374. *Ebers' Durch Gosen*, p. 529.

up with others, that it is impossible to separate such as would seem natural in the case of a servant of the One God, like Jacob. We know, however, from Genesis,¹ that the cavalcade which escorted the body to its last resting place was at once large and illustrious. The courtiers and ministers of state rode in it in their chariots; many of the slaves of Joseph swelled his train; the asses and vehicles of a pastoral tribe bore the "house" of Jacob—the children, only, remaining behind; and the whole cortège was guarded and made more striking by a force of Egyptian horse and charioteers. Having reached the open-air threshing floor known as Atad, "the Cactus"—perhaps from thickets of prickly pear growing round—the bier rested for seven days,² while the air resounded with the wailings of the mourners, so characteristic of the East in all ages. Possibly, also, these days saw the funeral games with which, then, as now, Arabs are wont to circle round the grave of a chief.³ Singularly enough a seven days lamentation for the dead still obtains in the communities east of the Jordan and of Lebanon. It is observed in a black goat-hair tent set up on the threshing floor, which lies usually on the west side of a village, the corpse being laid upon the thresher's

¹ Chap. 1. 7.

² 1 Sam. xxxi. 13. Judith xvi. 34. Sir. xxii. 12.

³ This is implied in the old interpretation, as in Rosenmüller and Clericus, of the name Beth Hoglah, given by St. Jerome to the spot. But the identification is very doubtful. The name, moreover, seems derived not from the dances round the bier or grave, but from the much more prosaic fact, that the partridge is very plenty in the neighbourhood—Beth Hoglah seeming really to mean "the place of partridges" (*Riehm*). *Riehm* thinks it was on the east of Jordan, but *Winer* and *Kneucker* think the writer speaks from the direction in which the procession was advancing—towards the Jordan—so that Atad would be on this side of it.

wooden standing place in the middle of the floor.¹ The narrative seems to imply that they came, not by the direct road by El Arish and Beersheba, over which Jacob and Abraham had gone down to Egypt, but by a long circuit round the south of the Dead Sea and through the land of Moab and of Ammon—the track along which his descendants were hereafter to reach Canaan, under Moses and Joshua.² But the circuit necessary for such a journey makes it, one would almost think, out of the question, and gives great weight to the idea that Moses, writing on the East side of the Jordan, simply means that Atad was on the other, without stating where. St. Jerome indeed identifies it with a place called Beth Hoglah, near the Jordan, on the west side of the river, but there was another Beth Hoglah in the country of the Philistines, which is much more likely to have been the spot.³ A play upon another name given by tradition to the scene, wherever it may have been, marks, however, the deep impression made by the incident on the popular mind—for henceforth the locality bore a name which equally meant, according to the pronunciation—"the meadow" or "the lamentation" of the Egyptians. The cave of Machpelah, a few days later, received the new inmate, and there, in all probability, the mummy of Jacob rests still, uncorrupted.

Little more is told us of Joseph except that he bore himself kindly to his brethren after his father's death; that he lived one hundred and ten years and saw Ephraim's grandchildren, and that he took the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, into his bosom—fondling and petting them in their infancy: a tender picture of the loving-heartedness of the old man, like that of Homer, when the nurse lays

¹ *Riehm*, art. Atad.

² *Knobel*, p. 493.

³ *The Land and The Book*, p. 580.

the new-born Ulysses on the knees of his grandfather Autolykos.¹ True to the end to the promise handed down from his fathers, Joseph disappears from our view leaving a solemn charge to his brethren to carry his bones out of Egypt with them, when God should lead them back to Canaan. The Egyptians were accustomed to place the embalmed bodies of their friends in mummy cases of wood, and lay them up safely in a tomb, or keep them in a special chamber in their own houses. Joseph's mummy remained thus in possession of the Israelites till the Exodus, and was then taken by his descendants to Canaan, as he had made their forefathers swear to do, and laid finally at rest in the piece of ground at Shechem which Jacob had long before bought.² There, to this day, his tomb, rightly or wrongly, is pointed out under the shadow of Mount Ebal.³ "If this is the real tomb," says my late worthy friend, Mr. Mills,—“and there is every reason to believe it is—then, underneath, is the sarcophagus, and even the mummy of Joseph, just as they were when deposited by the conquerors.”⁴

¹ *Odyss.*, xix. 401. See also *Gen.* xxx. 3.

² *Exod.* xiii. 19; xxxiii. 19. *Josh.* xxiv. 32.

³ *The Land and The Book*, p. 473. Mills (*Nablus*, p. 64) thinks it the true site. See also *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. pp. 80–82.

⁴ Mills' *Nablus*, p. 66.



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HOURS WITH THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAND OF GOSHEN.

THE district of Egypt¹ which was to be the cradle of the Hebrew nation, lay on its north-east frontier, and was thus at once nearest Canaan, from which their fathers had come, and most isolated from the Egyptian population, to whom the presence of foreign nomadic shepherds² was at all times distasteful. Shepherd races allied to the Hebrews had, moreover, already largely settled in it, and were thus, virtually, a protection to the side of the Nile Valley lying open towards Asia, which had no other safeguard than the fortified wall between Suez and the Mediterranean. The precise position of Goshen is not mentioned in the Bible, but it is certain, on various grounds, that it lay as above stated. Thus, Joseph's brethren were required to halt, on entering it, till Pharaoh had been seen and had expressed his

¹ Lengerke derives Egypt from *Sanscr.* Aguptas = "The protected." *Kenaan*, p. 351.

² The Coptic word for shepherd means also a "disgrace." *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. *Goshen*. The Copts are the descendants of the Ancient Egyptians.

pleasure concerning them; and there is no mention of the Nile having been passed to reach it, or of the Hebrews having re-crossed that river at the Exodus.¹ They were, moreover, near the Red Sea, for a few marches brought them to it. Further, the Egyptian "nome" or district Qesem—a name almost identical with Gesen or Gesem, used for Goshen in the Greek version—in the region otherwise suggested as that assigned to Jacob and his tribe, lay on the distant north-east of the country.

According to Ebers,² the limits of this tract stretched southwards in a narrow tongue, almost to the present Cairo, on the west side of the Tanitic branch of the Nile, which formed, in fact, its western boundary to the sea. On the south, on the other hand, it bent north-eastwardly from Cairo to the line of the present Suez Canal, which, however, it presently crossed, reaching the Mediterranean at Pelusium, where the ancient fortified wall from Suez abutted on the shore. But any exact knowledge of the boundaries is perhaps, as yet, impossible, if we may judge from the controversy respecting them.³

Goshen is praised by Pharaoh, in the audience granted to Joseph, as ranking with the best of the land,⁴ which

¹ Other proofs are given in *Durch Gosen*, pp. 505 ff.

² Map, in *Durch Gosen*, p. 72.

³ Ebers and Brugsch think that the name Gesem or Gesen is still traceable in the Arab village Faqus, called Phakousa by the ancients. It is equivalent, in Ancient Egyptian, to the word Qos, with the article, and Qos is part at least of Gosh-en. The Greek Bible calls Goshen "Gesem of Arabia," that is, of the Arabian nome, or the nome bordering on Arabia, on the north-east of Egypt, and Faqus was anciently the capital of this. But Qesem, the old Egyptian name of a nome, is, as has been said above, apparently that of the Hebrew district. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, pp. 503 ff. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 339.

⁴ Gen. xlvii. 6, 11.

implies its extreme fertility; but it must also have been well suited for pasture. Long neglect has now reduced it to a barren desert of sand and loose stone, powdered with a salt efflorescence from the soil; but the proof of its ancient richness is seen along the banks of the freshwater canal, led by Lesseps from the Nile to the great Suez Canal. Wherever water reaches, by irrigation from this, Goshen blossoms into wild beauty,¹ showing that moisture alone is needed to make the whole landscape a succession of luxuriant meadows and golden cornfields. Nothing could better illustrate the force of Napoleon's remark, that under a good government the Nile invades the Desert, but under a bad one the Desert invades the Nile. Thus the "field of Zoan," that is, the country round about the city of Rameses-Tanis, in this region—a district anciently so fertile and "well watered" as to recall to the Hebrews the glories of the garden of Eden²—is now a desolate sandy plain, covered with gigantic ruins of columns, pillars, sphinxes, and stones of buildings.³ By a singular good fortune, a letter of an Egyptian scribe has been preserved, which describes it as it was in the time of the Hebrew oppression. "I arrived," says the writer, "at the city of Rameses Miamun, and found it a very charming place, with which nothing in or round Thebes can compare. The seat of the court is here. It is pleasant to live in. Its fields are full of good things, and life passes in constant plenty and abundance. It has a daily market. Its canals are rich in fish: its lakes swarm with birds: its meadows are green with vegetables: there is no end of the lentils, and melons which taste like honey grow in its irrigated fields. Its barns are full of wheat and durra,

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 21.

² Gen. xv. 10.

³ Brugsch's *Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 352.

and reach as high as heaven. Onions and leeks grow in bunches in the enclosures. The vine, the almond-tree and the fig-tree grow in the gardens. There is plenty of sweet wine, the produce of Egypt, which they mix with honey. The red fish is in the Lotus canal; the Borian fish in the ponds; many kinds of Bori fish, besides carp and pike, in the canal of Pu-harotha:¹ fat-fish and Kephli-pennu fish in the pools of the inundation: the Hanaz fish in the full mouth of the Nile, near Tanis. The pool of Horus furnishes salt, the Panhura lake nitre. Their ships enter the harbour; plenty and abundance are perpetual. He rejoices who has settled here. The reedy lake is full of lilies: that of Pshensor is gay with papyrus flowers. Fruits from the nurseries: flowers from the gardens: festoons from the vineyards; birds from the ponds, are dedicated to the feasts of King Rameses. Those who live near the sea come with fish. Feasts in honour of the heavenly bodies and of the great events of the seasons interest the whole population. The youth are perpetually clad in festive attire, with fine oil on their heads of freshly curled hair. On the day when Rameses II.—the war god Mout, on earth—came to the city, they stood at their doors with branches of flowers in their hands, and garlands (on their heads). All the people were assembled, neighbour with neighbour, to bring forward their complaints. Girls trained in the singing schools of Memphis filled the air with songs. The wine was delicious: the cider was like sugar: the sherbet, like almonds mixed with honey. There was beer from Galilee (Kati) in the port, (brought in ships from Palestine): wine from the vineyards: with sweet refreshments from lake Sagabi: and garlands from

¹ One of these fish is said to come from the river Picharta—the Euphrates—of course salted.

the orchards. They sat there with joyful heart, or walked about without ceasing. King Rameses Miamun was the god they celebrated thus.”¹

Such was one part of Goshen at the time of the Exodus; but thirty-six centuries have seen a wonderful transformation of the scene, once so full of warm life and natural beauty. On the banks of the sweet-water canal, which now runs eastwards through the Wady Tumilat to the Suez Canal—at a spot where the vestiges of an ancient canal still remain, near Maschuta, there stands an immense block of granite, representing on its front face, in relief, a Pharaoh sitting between the gods Ra and Tum. It is no other than Rameses II., for his name occurs six times in the inscription on the back of the block. The remains of innumerable bricks made of the mud of the Nile, mixed with straw, and stamped with his cipher, lie around—the wreck of the old wall of the City of Rameses. The identification leaves no room for doubt, but the solitary stone and the dust of the once proud town are all that remain to fix its site.

Egypt, as Herodotus truly said, is “the gift of the Nile.” The fertilizing mud deposited by the yearly overflow of the great river, and its quickening waters, led everywhere over the soil, have from the remotest ages created a long ribbon of the richest green along the banks; in many places, especially in Upper Egypt, not more than two miles across, and seldom more than ten, including the river, which is from 2,000 to 4,000 feet broad.² A few miles north of Cairo, however, the magni-

¹ *Anastasi Papyrus*, III. plate i. 11. Translated by C. W. Goodwin, M.A., in *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. pp. 11-16; and by Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, vol. ii. pp. 96 ff.

² *English Cyclo.*, art. *Egypt*.

ficent stream, after a course of over 4,000 miles,¹ entering a wide low plain, which from its resemblance to the triangular Greek letter Delta, Δ , has received that name, presently divides into the Rosetta and Damietta branches, which determine the shape of the cultivated land by their course; though fertility extends, east and west, beyond them, as far as their waters are led by irrigation. In the days of the Hebrew settlement in Egypt, the Pelusiac branch of the river, which formed the western boundary of Goshen, parted from the main stream at a point higher up than that at which the Damietta branch leaves it, but it is now in a great measure choked up, though it still serves in some degree to water the land on its edges.

Four thousand years ago, the rich landscape of the Delta, created in the course of ages by the mud left each year on the retiring of the Nile waters—though of less extent than at present—must have been everywhere the scene of busy life and high civilization. The first Egyptian monarchy had had its seat at Memphis ages before Jacob's day, and the kings of the Old Empire who flourished there, had left monuments of their greatness, which were old in the times of the patriarch, and still astonish the world. Huge dykes, like those of Holland, were made by them, to keep the Nile from flooding the cities, which, themselves, were built on artificial mounds, raised high above the level of the annual inundations. The turquoise mines of the Sinai peninsula had been discovered and were vigorously worked. The forced labour of tens of thousands had built the gigantic masses of the pyramids, of limestone from the quarries of the neighbouring Arabian hills, cased with huge blocks of granite from Assouan at the first cataracts, far up the

¹ Dümichen's *Geschichte des alten Ägyptens*, p. 8.

river; wonderfully polished, and cut with an exactness which modern skill still envies.¹ A vast series of tombs, hewn out of the rock, beneath the soil, stretched far and wide on the plateau of the Lybian Hills, a league west of Memphis—above the reach of the inundation—a series of subterranean palaces, which already awed the patriarch Job, as the “desolate palaces” which kings and counsellors of the earth had built for themselves.” The landscape, everywhere, had been intersected with canals of irrigation, and lines of dykes, along which traffic might continue to pass freely during the inundations.³ But the Ancient Empire had passed away some hundreds of years before Jacob settled in Goshen, and dynasties had succeeded it under which Egypt steadily advanced in population, wealth, and general development; till, in the centuries of the Hebrew settlement, civilization in its highest forms, as understood in the valley of the Nile, surrounded the immigrants on every hand.

The dead level of a river delta must always have made the landscapes of Goshen, in some respects, monotonous. But even a flat surface, when broken by towns and villages, and diversified by trees rising from amidst a prospect of varied fertility, may have quiet charms of its own, as we see in not a few views of town and country in Holland.

The year was virtually divided into three seasons;

¹ The causeway to bring the stone to the Great Pyramid, from the Nile, employed 100,000 men, relieved every three months, for ten years, or, in all 4,000,000 men, and twenty years more were spent, with the labour, in each, of 360,000 men, in building the pyramid itself. Thus, in all, 7,000,000 men toiled in forced labour, to rear this amazing monument. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*.

² Job iii. 14. *Olshausen*. Ewald and Merx translate it “pyramids;” De Wette, “funeral monuments.”

³ Birch, *Egypt from the Monuments*, chap. i.

that in which the cities and hamlets rose like islands above the universal sea of Nile waters, with the dykes and elevated roads stretching out like threads between: then, the months in which the fields and pastures were in their glory: and finally, a time of scorching heat and dusty hardened ground, when the moisture of the yearly inundation had been dried up by the sun. But even at this season, Egypt had charms all its own. The morning was deliciously cool, and through the day the sun poured a flood of dazzling splendour from a cloudless sky of the deepest azure, while the transparent air brought out even distant objects with wondrous clearness, through an atmosphere trembling as if heated over a flame.¹ Both at morning and evening, the play of the light shed countless tints of gold, or rose, or violet, on the clouds or on the Arabian hills. A sunset at Suez, described by Ebers, was doubtless like many gazed at with wonder by the Hebrews in the Delta. "The water quivered in still lovelier colours than at noon, and the finely formed Ataka hills on the west shore, stretching away to the south till they seemed to fade into the glowing horizon, were bathed in blue and violet mists, which, after a time, gave place to a splendour of colour that I never saw elsewhere on the Nile. The mountains looked as if they were a molten mass of blended pomegranate and amethyst, and, as such, mirrored themselves in the waves which ran up to their feet—ebbing and retiring, moment by moment."²

But even night in Egypt, compared with that of other

¹ *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 60.

² *Durch Gosen*, p. 57. Burton no less glowingly paints the colours of the atmosphere in Egypt, at sunset and sunrise. *Pilgrimage to Meccah*, p. 109.

lands, is a dream of beauty, for the moon shines out with wondrous brightness, and, in her absence, unnumbered stars make the heavens white with glory.

The villages and hamlets of the Delta in Jacob's day, as now, were built on mounds raised high enough to protect from the yearly inundation, the mud huts of which they consisted. Canals, led from the Pelusiatic branch of the Nile, and subdivided into numberless lesser channels and rivulets, covered the landscape with a vast network of irrigation, and made it impossible to pass from one place to another except along the dykes; which at once regulated the admission of the yearly flood and supplied the country with practicable roads. Creaking water-wheels, turned by buffaloes, asses, or camels, raised water night and day into the canals, from the lower bed of the Nile. High palms marked from a distance the raised hamlets, lofty dovecots, always near each other, serving as a second characteristic; for the huts of to-day are indistinguishable till one approaches them, and in a country so unchanging they have doubtless been always the same. Simple in the extreme, they consist of only two rooms, except in rare cases, and are built only of the mud dried into bricks in the hot sun—a few days sufficing to raise them from the ground to the roof. Such a landscape is inevitably monotonous, but it is relieved by the variety of the produce on every hand; and canals, palms, water-wheels, villages, camels, flocks of birds in the waters and meadows, and the almost naked, sunburnt fellahs—poor and wretched beyond measure, amidst the infinite bounty of nature—keep awake the interest of the modern traveller.¹

The condition of the peasantry seems always to have been miserable in Egypt, though it may have been much

¹ Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, pp. 19-20.

less so among the Hebrews in an isolated district like Goshen. But even as far back as the time of Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid, long before Abraham visited the Nile Valley, there had been a huge clamour of the oppressed against the oppressor, from one end of the land to the other; a cry of anguish and bitter agony which since that time has often risen from Egypt. The will of the tyrant has always ruled, whether it ordered the building of the Great Pyramid or the making a barrage for the Nile.¹ The land may have changed its religion, its language, and its population; the lot of the fellah has been always the same whether a Pharaoh,² a Sultan, or a Pacha reigned. No wonder that statues of Cheops, broken and dishonoured, have been discovered in our day near the Temple of the Sphinx, in deep wells, into which they had been ignominiously thrown, ages ago, in popular risings against his tyranny.³ In the days of Abraham it was the same as in the then long vanished Ancient Empire. The capital had been transferred from Memphis, in the north, to Thebes, in the south, but the working classes as well as the peasants had still a very hard lot. Shrinking before the stick of the taskmaster, which was constantly over them, they had to toil from morning to night, to gain a meagre support for themselves and their households. A letter of this era, from a scribe to his son, trying to induce him to follow learning rather than a trade, paints the condition of the blacksmith, the metal-worker, the stone-cutter and the quarry-man, the barber, the boatman, the mason, the weaver, the maker of arms, the courier, the dyer, and the shoemaker as alike to be pitied;

¹ Osburn, *Monumental History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 275.

² The name Pharaoh is now equivalent, among the Arabs, to "tyrant." *Burton*.

³ Mariette, *Lettre à M. le Vicomte de Rougé*, p. 7.

but it may be that the portraits are overdrawn.¹ Yet Ebers has given us a sketch of the crowd at Thebes in the time of Moses, which, in part at least, corroborates the scribe. "Under a wide-spreading sycamore," says he, "a vendor of eatables, spirituous drinks, and acids for cooling the water, had set up his stall, and close to him a crowd of boatmen and drivers shouted and disputed as they passed the time in eager games of morra. Many sailors lay on the decks of the vessels, others on the shore: here in the thin shade of a palm-tree, there in the full blaze of the sun; from whose burning rays they protected themselves by spreading over their faces the cotton cloths which served them for cloaks.

"Between the sleepers passed bondmen and slaves, brown and black, in long files, one behind the other, bending under the weight of heavy burdens, which had to be conveyed to their destination at the temples, for sacrifice, or to the dealers in various wares. Builders dragged blocks of stone, which had come from the quarries of Chennu and Suan, on sledges, to the site of a new temple; labourers poured water under the runners that the heavily loaded and dried wood should not take fire.

"All these working men were driven with sticks by their overseers, and sang at their labours; but the voices of the leaders sounded muffled and hoarse, though, when, after their frugal meal they enjoyed an hour of repose, they might be heard loud enough. Their parched throats refused to sing in the noontide of their labour. Thick clouds of gnats followed these tormented gangs, who with dull and spirit-broken endurance suffered alike the stings of the insects and the blows of their drivers."²

¹ *Muspero*, p. 123. This letter is there given in full.

² *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 61.

The children of the poor lived, to a great extent, on the pith of the papyrus plant and bread made of the pounded seeds of the lotus flower,¹ and radishes, onions and garlic were the staple food of their parents.² But in Goshen at least the Hebrews had fish for the catching, and cucumbers, melons, and leeks,³ which are still the food of the humbler Egyptians, though the fish now used is salt.⁴ The Nile indeed was, and still is, wondrously rich in fish, and in no country do melons and other fruits and vegetables of the climate grow more luxuriously. When the river shrinks back into its bed, all useful grains and plants grow up with marvellous rapidity and vigour. Wheat, barley, spelt, maize, haricot beans, lentils, peas, flax, hemp, onions, scallions, citrons, cucumbers, melons, almost cumber the ground. The lotus, in Joseph's day, floated on the waters, and innumerable waterfowl built their nests among the papyrus reeds along the banks. Between the river or its branch, and the far-off desert, lay wide fields. Near the brooks and water-wheels rose shady sycamores and groves of date-palms carefully tended. The fruitful plain, indeed, watered and manured every year by the inundation, was framed in the desert like a garden flower-bed within its gravel path.⁵

¹ *Uarda*, p. 197. Diodorus says that a child did not cost its parents 20 drachmæ, about fifteen shillings, for food and clothing till it was a good size. The lotus and papyrus grew wild in vast quantities, and children ran about naked.

² *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 303. 1,600 talents = £360,000 worth, were consumed during the building of the Great Pyramid. *Herod.*, ii. 125. *Plin.*, *N. H.*, xxxvi. 17.

³ *Num* xi. 5.

⁴ Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 207. Burton says that garlic and onions are always specially in favour in lands liable to fevers and agues, as natural preventives. *Pilgrimage to Meccah*, p. 23.

⁵ *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 6.

Memphis,¹ the capital of the Empire in the time of Joseph, lay on the west side of the Nile, about 12 miles south of the present Cairo, and about 20 south of the great Temple- and University-city of On or Heliopolis; the Jerusalem of Egypt. Protected on the east by the Nile against attacks from Arabia, Assyria, Persia, and even Scythia, to which that frontier was always exposed, it had on the west only the feeble Libyan tribes, separated from it by a range of hills, and was thus comparatively safe. The plain on which it was built, though resting on the limestone rock, was originally a marsh; but an embankment raised in remote antiquity by Menes, the founder of the Ancient Empire, cut off the overflow of the Nile, and the swamps were drained into neighbouring lakes, which, with the river, surrounded the city with a strong defence of water.

The area of Memphis, like that of all eastern cities, was large in proportion to its population, embracing a circuit of at least 15 miles,² but in this was included much open ground laid out as gardens, besides space for public buildings, temples, and palaces, and the barracks of the garrison, in the quarter known as the White Castle. Within the wall, with its ramparts and bastions, which formed the fortifications of the city, stood the old palace of the kings, a stately structure of brick, with courts, corridors, chambers, and halls, without number; verandah-like out-buildings of gaily painted wood; and a magnificent pillared banqueting hall. Verdurous gardens surrounded it, and a whole host of labourers tended the flower beds and shady alleys, the shrubs and the trees;

¹ *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. pp. 55–57, 210, 212. Memphis was dedicated to the goddess Ptah; the word means “The home of Ptah.” *Lengerke*, p. 350.

² *Diodorus*, i. 50. 150 stadia.

or kept the tanks clean and fed the fish in them.¹ The mound which curbed the inundations of the Nile was so essential to the very existence of the city, that even the Persians, who destroyed or neglected the other great works of the country, annually repaired it.² The climate was wonderfully healthy, and the soil beyond measure fertile, while the views from the walls were famous among both the Greeks and Romans. Bright green meadows stretched round the city, threaded everywhere by canals thick with beds of the lotus flower. Trees of such girth that three men could not encircle them with outstretched arms, rose in clumps; the wide gardens supplied Rome with roses even in winter, and the gay vineyards yielded wine of which poets sang.³ Its position, moreover, in the "narrows" of Egypt, where the Arabian and Libyan hills, hitherto girding in the narrow valley of the river, begin to diverge and form the Delta, gave Memphis the command of all the trade of the country both up and down the stream.

It may have been surpassed in the grandeur of its temples by Thebes,⁴ the capital of the Middle Empire, in southern Egypt, but that city had fewer of them, and it had no such public or commercial buildings. A spacious and beautiful temple in Memphis honoured the goddess Isis, while that of the sacred bull, Apis, famous for its colonnades, its oracle, and its processions, was the cathedral of Egypt, attracting countless worshippers and maintaining a numerous, rich and learned priesthood. Apis, or Hapi—to the Egyptians, the most perfect

¹ Ebers, *The Sisters*, vol. i. p. 130.

² *Herod.*, ii. 99.

³ *Diodor.*, i. 96. *Pliny*, xiii. 10; xvi. 21. *Martial*, vi. 80. *Athenæus*, i. 20.

⁴ Thebes = No Amon = Home of Amon. *Ges. Theb.*

expression of divinity in an animal form—had, moreover, a second temple, also, in the necropolis,—afterwards enlarged and called the Serapeion—in which was the Nilometer, for recording the yearly rise of the inundation. But the Temple of Ptah, the Egyptian Vulcan, to whom the scarabæus beetle was sacred, was the most ancient local shrine. Its great northern court had been erected before Joseph's day, and Rameses the Third afterwards raised in it six colossal portrait statues, of himself, his queen, and their four sons. One of these, 45 feet high, still lies, overthrown, near a thicket of palms, among the mounds of ruin, in a pool of water left by the inundations, which always, year by year, cover the spot—its back upwards and the name of Rameses on the belt—the last memorial of the great king. Spacious and magnificent eastern, western, and southern courts were added in later but still ancient times. It was at Memphis that Herodotus, nearly 1,500 years after Joseph's death,¹ made his longest stay in Egypt, and thither came, from time to time, many of the sages of antiquity to learn the sciences and philosophy for which its priests were famous.²

The remains of the city cover many hundred acres, but consist only of blocks of granite, broken obelisks, and the fragments of columns and colossal statues; for successive generations have, age after age, used its ruins as a great quarry for their own structures. But the plain is still wide and fertile, with a succession of palm groves, running along the river's edge, and springing in many spots from green turf. "Behind these palms, and beyond the plain, rises the white back of the African hills. Behind that again, 'as the hills round about Jerusalem,' the pyramids, the mighty sepulchres of the

¹ Joseph, b. B.C. 1912., *Bib. Lex.* Herodotus, died circa B.C., 400

² *Dict. of Geog.*, art. *Memphis*.

kings of Lower Egypt, surround Memphis; while, in the sandhills at their feet, are the vast sepulchres of the citizens. For miles you walk through layers of bones, and skulls, and mummy swathings, sometimes near the surface, but often deep down, in shaft-like mummy pits, among which are vast galleries once filled with mummies of ibises, in red jars, but now in many cases despoiled. Lastly, are long galleries hewn in the rock—only discovered recently—and opening from time to time, say every fifty yards, into high arched vaults, under each of which reposes the most magnificent black marble sarcophagus that can be conceived—a chamber rather than a coffin—sculptured within and without, more grandly than any human sepulchres elsewhere.”¹ They are only, however, the resting places of the successive corpses of the god Apis—the sacred Ox. At first each sacred animal had a separate tomb in the part of the necropolis afterwards known as the Serapeion, but towards the middle of the reign of Rameses II., while the Hebrews were yet in Egypt, a common cemetery was begun. A gallery, hewn out for 125 feet in the living rock, was pierced, successively, on each side, with fourteen spacious chambers; other galleries and other chambers being added as they were needed. The mummy once laid in its place, the entrance to the chamber was walled up, but worshippers still came, to engrave their names, and prayers to the dead Apis, on the wall, or on the rock close by. Abraham had perhaps seen the processions of this strange worship, for it was already ancient in his day,² and it survived to the last periods of Egyptian history, when Christianity, having dispersed the priests, the tombs were abandoned

¹ Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*. p. lii.

² It was established by the second king of the Second Dynasty. *Maspero*, p. 50.

after having been violated, and were then gradually buried beneath the sands of the desert. It was reserved to M. Mariette to bring them again to light in 1851, after an oblivion of more than 1,400 years.¹

On, or Heliopolis, the City of the Sun, according to Ebers, marked the southern limit of Goshen, as Zoan or Tanis, its northern, on the west side. It was there that Joseph found his Egyptian bride, the daughter of the high priest of its great temple, and it was as the priest Osarsiph, of this sanctuary, that Moses was handed down by the Egyptians in their traditions.²

That Hebrews lived in On in the times of the oppression can hardly be doubted, for a papyrus still gives us the names of the civil and military officers charged, in the reign of Rameses III., about one hundred years after the Exodus, with the oversight of 2,083 Hebrews residing there; descendants, very probably, of some who failed to make their escape with their brethren, or chose to remain behind. It was in some respects the very metropolis of Egyptian religion and "wisdom," for the most famous University of the land flourished in it, and the old Sun-god Ra was the local divinity of the Heliopolitan "nome";³ the name On meaning "the sun."⁴ The setting sun, Tum, was however also worshipped as the luminary of the Nether World, with Shu, the son of Ra, and 'Tafnet, his lion-headed daughter, Osiris, Isis, Hathor, and the cat-headed divinity, Bast. Nor did even

¹ Mariette, *Mémoire sur la Mère d'Apis*, 1856.

² Jos., c. *Apion*, i. 26.

³ *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 223.

⁴ This name is given it in Jeremiah xliii. 13, in the Hebrew form, Beth Shemesh—"the House of the Sun." Heliopolis is only the Greek rendering of "City of the Sun." Brugsch explains On as meaning, "The pointed columns," "the obelisks." *History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 128.

these exhaust the pantheon of On. It was also the seat of the worship of the phoenix, an imaginary bird, famous in Egyptian mythology, and of the sacred calf Mnevis,¹ the rival of the sacred bull Apis, of Memphis, which was said to have sprung from it. It had had its shrine at On since the long past days of the Second Dynasty. Sacred lions were also worshipped, in honour of the goddess Tafnet. Worse than all, however, in Joseph's time, and till after the expulsion of the Hyksos, human sacrifices of red-haired foreign captives were offered to Typhon, the red god of evil, and to Sati.²

The temple was in its full glory in the days of Joseph and during the centuries of the Hebrew sojourn. Great colleges of priests lived in chambers specially built for them within its holy precincts, and besides taking charge of the sacred animals, attended to the services of the many gods honoured in its worship. In addition to these, there were numbers of learned priests connected with the medical, theological, and historical faculties of the temple; the special depositaries of the science, religious and secular, for which Egypt was renowned. The observatory of the temple was famous, and it is to its priest-astronomers we are indebted for the exact computation of the length of the year. Of the four great Temple Universities of the land—Memphis, Thebes,

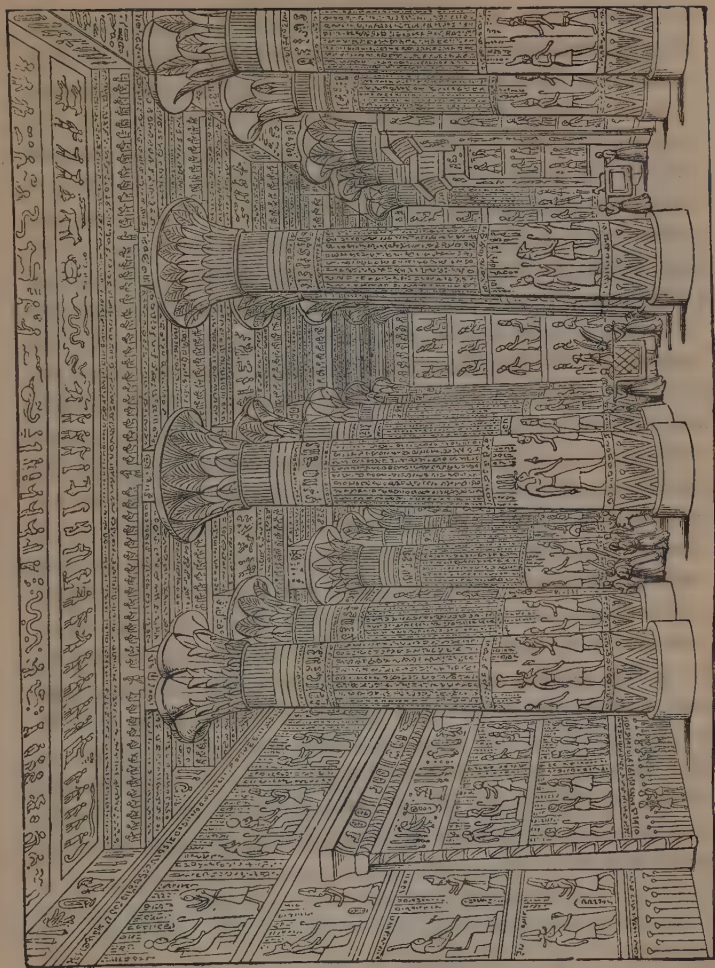
¹ Merx and Pressel speak of Mnevis as black, but Ebers says it was bright-coloured, which seems to agree better with the Israelites making a "*golden calf*" in imitation of it, if that idol were really intended to be so.

² Ahmes I., the conqueror of the Hyksos, abolished human sacrifice, which the Hyksos had perhaps introduced from Syria, substituting wax figures of men, of which three were offered daily. It is noteworthy, that though native Egyptian monuments do not speak of human sacrifice, the design on the "*offering seal*" used, is a man bound, with a sword at his throat.

Sais, and On—that of On held the first rank. Its high priest came next in dignity to the Pharaoh himself, and was a prince of the empire—the Piromis, “the noble and the good”—and thus the marriage of Joseph to the daughter of so august a dignitary at once secured his position in the state. From its higher priests, moreover, no fewer than ten members of the great priestly council of Pharaoh were chosen—that is, one-third of the whole. No centre of Egyptian influence more powerfully or abidingly affected the Hebrews than this great centre of Egyptian thought and worship.

Heliopolis, or On, now stands in the midst of green fields of corn and clover, varied, as one approaches it from Cairo, by clumps of tamarisk, fig-trees, and acacias. Roads along the top of dykes, raised high above the champaign around, to secure communication during the yearly inundation, form still, as of old, the connecting threads with other districts, while quickening rills poured by water-wheels from canals, fall at every turn into lesser channels along the roadside, and branch off into the fields. At the edge of the cultivated ground are the ruins of On, now only a wide enclosure of earthen mounds, partly planted with gardens, in which are the most noticeable vestiges left of the great temple. Among these is the sacred Spring of the Sun, to-day almost choked by luxuriant vegetation, but famous in antiquity for its healing powers, and apparently the cause of the selection of this remote spot for the renowned sanctuary. Close by is an obelisk, the last still standing of the many which rose at the great gateways. The vast temple of Baalbek, or Heliopolis, in Syria, originally a priest colony from On, is built in the same way near a spring sacred to the sun, though obelisks were not raised there as in the mother city.

In the time of the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt, a visitor having reached the artificial platform on which all Heliopolis was built, and wishing to visit the great sun-temple, passed first under the cool shade of a sacred grove, planted on the edges of the sacred lake in its grounds. A pavement of stone, cemented with asphalte, about a hundred feet broad and three or four times as long, now opened before him, lined on each side with huge sphinxes of yellow marble, placed at regular distances. This brought him to the great gates or pylons; huge structures standing quite apart from all else. He then passed under the immense chief gate, adorned, like that of all Egyptian temples, with a broad winged disk of the sun. The widely opened doors were flanked on each side by a forest of lofty obelisks, intended as emblems of the solar rays, and nowhere else so numerous as here, where they fittingly adorned the entrance of the great Temple of the Sun. Huge flagstaffs, from which fluttered long red and blue streamers, contended with these in height. A great stone-flagged court, bordered to right and left with a portico resting on lines of pillars, came next—its centre, the sacred spot on which offerings were presented to the god. The whole front of the temple-proper was now seen rising, fortress-like, at one side of the court; its surface covered with brightly painted figures and inscriptions. Inside the porch was a lofty hall of approach; then the great hall, the roof of which, sown over with thousands of golden stars, rested on four rows of gigantic pillars. The shafts and lotus-formed capitals, the side walls and niches of this immense chamber, indeed all objects around, were covered with many-coloured paintings and hieroglyphics. The huge pillars, the roof immensely high and proportionally broad and long, filled the mind



TEMPLE OF ESNEH.

with awe, while the air was loaded with the odours of incense, and of the fragrant gums and spices of the laboratory of the temple. Soft music from unseen players seemed never to cease; though broken now and then by the low of the sacred ox, or of the sacred cow of Isis, or the screech of the sparrow-hawk of Horus, which were housed in neighbouring chambers. As often as the bellowing of the ox or cow was heard, or the shrill cry of the hawk, the kneeling worshippers touched the stone pavement of the forecourt with their brow. Meanwhile all eyes eagerly gazed, ever and anon, into the hidden interior of the temple, where numerous priests stood in the holy of holies, a chapel-like structure formed of a single vast stone. Some of these wore high ostrich feathers over their bald heads, others the skins of panthers over white linen robes; some bowed or raised themselves as they sang or murmured litanies, others swung censers or poured out pure water from golden vessels, as libations to the gods. Only the most favoured Egyptians dared enter the gigantic hall, and then, the eye, the ear, and even the breathing were surrounded by influences farthest from those of everyday existence, contracting the bosom and agitating the nerves. Overwhelmed and cut off from the outer world, the worshipper had to seek support outside himself, in the divinity whom the voices of the priests, the mysterious music, and the sounds of the holy animals appeared to indicate as close at hand.¹

¹ Ebers, *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 109. Other authorities, however, describe Egyptian temples somewhat differently. Thus Schaafé writes: "Egyptian temples were so constructed, as to intensify the earnestness and enthusiasm of the worshipper by chambers continually smaller and lower. The turns to be taken were all pointed out, no going in another way was allowed, and

Dean Stanley's description of this great temple is striking. "Over the portal we can hardly doubt, was the figure of the sun-god; not in the sublime indistinctness of the natural orb, nor yet in the beautiful impersonation of the Grecian Apollo, but in the strange grotesque form of the Hawk-headed monster. Enter, and the dark Temple opens and contracts successively into its outermost, its inner, and its innermost hall; the Osiride figures in their placid majesty support the first, the wild and savage exploits of kings and heroes fill the second; and in the furthest recess of all, underneath the carved figure of the sun-god, and beside the solid altar, sate, in his gilded cage, the sacred hawk, or lay crouched on his purple bed the sacred black calf Mnevis, or Urmer; each the living, almost incarnate, representation of the deity of the Temple. Thrice a day, before the deified beast, the incense was offered, and once a month the solemn sacrifice. Each on his death was duly embalmed and deposited in a splendid sarcophagus. One such mummy calf is still to be seen at Cairo. The sepulchres of the long succession of deified calves at Heliopolis corresponded to that of the deified bulls at Memphis."¹

no mistake was possible. Visitors wandered full of awe between the rows of sacred beasts. The gates rose, afar, high and vast: then came another court; the walls were closer, the courts on a smaller scale, the floor was higher. All was subordinated to one end. Going on farther, the dissipation of thought natural to the open air passed away amidst the solemnity of the building, and the holiness of the symbols and pictures with which all objects were covered. The consecrated walls closed in, ever nearer, round the worshipper, till at last only the priestly foot could enter the lonely, echoing chamber of the god." *Kunstgeschichte*, vol. i. p. 394.

¹ *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 88.

Strabo visited Heliopolis about the time of the birth of Christ, and found the town deserted, and the temple, though still standing, a mere desolate memorial of greatness passed away. The neighbouring canals, long neglected, had formed broad marshes before it, and the fanatical barbarism of Cambyzes, which had wreaked itself on the obelisks and the sacred buildings more than five hundred years before, still showed many traces. Priests and philosophers, canons and professors, alike were gone from the spacious mansions round the cloisters of the vast courts. Only a few lower priests and vergers lingered about, to maintain what still remained of worship, or to show strangers over the silent quadrangles and deserted cloisters; but they still pointed out the house where Plato had lived for years when studying in their schools. Now, the solitary obelisk still standing, and great mounds full of fragments of marble and granite, and the wreck of a sphinx, alone recall the site. The water of the Nile overflows it each year, and rises nearly six feet up the stalk of the obelisk.¹

The only other town of Goshen, or on its borders, to be noticed till later, was Tanis, the Zoan of the Bible, a place built only seven years after Hebron, in Palestine.² The frontier town of Goshen on the north-west lay far to the north of On—on the right bank of the old Tanitic mouth of the Nile, which found its way to the Mediterranean through the Menzaleh sea. This stream overflowed the fields of the Hebrews, year by year, to the envious regret of the Egyptians, who regarded a blessing enjoyed by foreigners as a misfortune to themselves. Mythological fables expressed this feeling, by stigmatizing these waters as those by which Typhon floated out the corpse of the murdered Osiris to the ocean; but their

¹ *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 88.

² Num. xiii. 22.

real antipathy was from the channel winding through the lands of Semitic settlers. Tanis had been, apparently, founded by old Phenician colonists, and was already a residence of the Pharaohs before the invasion of the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, with their allied Canaanitish and Arabian tribes. The Hyksos themselves also lived in it, as shown by various mounuments still surviving; and when they were driven out, the Pharaohs came back to it and rebuilt it, to awe by their presence the mixed population of this region. The occasional presence of the majesty of Egypt, honoured as a god, could not but promote loyalty, since fortune depended on his favour. The town, moreover, was in effect a fortress as well as a royal residence; for no measures of precaution seemed too great to prevent a second Hyksos invasion, or to keep down a district related to that people in blood.

The name itself strangely corroborates the presence of a large foreign population in Tanis,¹ for the sign behind it in the hieroglyphic inscriptions marks that one existed—and these foreign citizens must have been Semitic. The city had, indeed, no less than seven names, connected with the gods worshipped in it, for the Egyptians gave their towns, in this way, many; sometimes, as in the cases of Edfu and Dendera, several hundreds. But of the seven borne by Tanis, two are Semitic; nor is it unworthy of notice that one is “The Field of Zoan,” the exact name of the town in one of the Psalms.² Another is: “The Town of Rameses,” for it was rebuilt and embellished, doubtless by Hebrew forced labour in part, by Rameses II.—though it is not the city specially known in the Bible as “Raamses,” described on an earlier page.³

¹ Tanis = Lowlying. *Lengerke* p. 350.

² Ps. lxxviii. 12.

³ See page 3.

Rameses-Tanis,—“The place of departure” for Palestine—is especially important as the scene of the wonders wrought by Moses before the Exodus.¹ It appears, next to Thebes, to have been the spot most liked by the Oppressor—the greatest of all the Pharaohs—and was chosen by him as his home both before and after his wars with the Asiatic races, who could be so easily reached from it. No place in Egypt is more striking in its ruins. The great temple of the town enclosed a huge space. Twelve obelisks of polished granite, brought from distant Syene, stood before it; eleven of which, bearing the name of Rameses, still lie around in broken fragments, attesting the ancient grandeur of the sanctuary which they adorned. There had been a temple from early times, but so many obelisks, columns, pillars, and statues, now shattered, and scattered far and wide, bear the name of the great king, that it seems at first as if he had created it wholly. The town itself was very large, even so late as the days of Christ, and rose on artificial mounds round the temple, though a series of grey hills of rubbish, full of fragments of bricks and pottery, are now its only memorials. From these, the houses are seen to have been built of sun-dried bricks of Nile mud, small alike in themselves and in their rooms, which, however, were often numerous. A sweet-water canal which occupies the ancient bed of the river branch still floats pretty large fisher-boats, which ply their trade on the neighbouring Menzaleh sea; and it is curious to notice, that even to-day the fishermen and peasants of the district are essentially different in their figures and features from the common Egyptian fellah. They are shorter in stature, and the side face is not so good, but the likeness to the profiles of the sphinxes left by the

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 43.

Hyksos is unmistakeable. Tanis was the local capital and the seat of government, to which the Semitic population round had free access, while Memphis and Thebes were more or less secluded from strangers. But all around is now a barren waste, which the canal passing through does not fertilize; a resort of wild beasts and reptiles, dotted with swamps which breed malignant fevers.¹

¹ The authorities for this chapter are, among others, Sepp's *Jerusalem und das Heilige Land*. Ebers' *Durch Gosen*. Schenkel's *Lexicon*. Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*. Herzog's *Encyklopädie*. Knobel's *Exodus*. Smith's *Bible Dictionary*. *The Dictionary of Geography*. Stanley's *Lectures*, and *Sinai and Palestine*. Ebers' *Uarda* and *Eine Ägyptische Königstochter*. Brugsch's *L'Exode et les Monuments Égyptiens*. Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, etc., etc.





CHAPTER II.

EGYPT BEFORE THE HEBREW SOJOURN.

WHEN Joseph was led by his Ishmaelite owners as a slave, to the bazaar of Memphis, for sale, fourteen dynasties had already flourished and passed away in Egypt. Of these, ten had reigned in Memphis and four at Thebes, in the south, but a fifteenth had now risen—that of the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, who had invaded and conquered Lower Egypt, and set themselves on the throne of the Pharaohs. Mena or Menes, “the constant,” the founder of Memphis and of the Egyptian nation, had obtained a site for his proposed city, by changing the course of a branch of the Nile. Building a huge dyke, he turned the river from its old bed and then filled up the old channel. Temples, reared first, were followed by a large population: the wonderful necropolis was begun, and pyramids were erected. From the beginning society seems to have been thoroughly organized. The Memphian high priests were great personages in the young state: the king was already the Perao, or Pharaoh—“the Great House”—with his queen, his harem, and his children. There were nobles and serfs; an elaborate organization of court ceremonial; and vast numbers of officials and slaves who ministered to the royal wants or glory. There was a keeper of

the royal wardrobe, a court hairdresser and nail-trimmer, and court musicians and singers. High officials took charge of the royal domains, the granaries, the cellars, the oil-chamber, the bakery, the butchering, and the stables. There were overseers of the public buildings, and numerous scribes, to record all public and private affairs. But amidst all this, there were taskmasters, from the first, over the wretched common people, who toiled at forced labour under the blows of the stick. The army was fully organized, but there were also men of science to study the heavens for religious and other ends, and to measure the fields, and raise the great structures in which the king delighted. The successors of Mena followed in his steps. Arts, laws, science and religion, were zealously promoted. The worship of the bull Apis and the calf Mnevis was introduced, mines were opened in the peninsula of Sinai, and fresh pyramids were built: those of Gizeh among others. Then came Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid raised near the mysterious Sphinx; the work of some earlier, unknown king. The third pyramid followed, and then others. Literature grew apace; sculptures, perfect as those of the Greeks, as seen by some relics still left, showed the highest culture of genius; gorgeous tombs were multiplied, and the mines of Sinai were worked with vigour. The name of one of the first kings of the Sixth Dynasty, Merira Pepi, is found on the oldest monuments at Tanis, and his public works can be traced all over Egypt. His campaigns extended so far to the south that negroes were enlisted in his armies. Before long, ships sailed down the Red Sea to Punt or Somaui land, on the east of Africa, and returned with the products of that region. The whole country was full of activity of all kinds.

The capital was now transferred to Thebes, where monuments of the Twelfth Dynasty still remain. Amenemhat I. extended the empire still farther to the south, and after waging wars in all other directions, left the record of his victories on the walls of temples built by him in every part of Egypt. Usurtasen I., his successor, founded On, and raised its great Sun Temple, with its obelisks. Gold flowed in from Nubia, and turquoises from the mines at Sinai, to which a caravan road led from the Nile. Fortresses were built far south, against the negroes, and the glory of the empire increased on all sides. The tombs of Benihassan, with their wonderful pictures of Egyptian everyday life and work, date from the reign of Usurtasen II., who lived about the time of Abraham. A later king constructed Lake Mœris, on the Libyan edge of the desert, as a vast reservoir of the Nile inundation, of priceless worth to the land,¹ and also built the wonderful palace known as the Labyrinth, with three thousand halls and chambers, half of them above ground and the rest below it, with twelve covered courts. Herodotus and Strabo alike speak of it as an amazing work: the latter stating that it was a representation of the whole kingdom, with a palace for each of the twenty-seven nomes. Unfortunately for our knowledge of details, however, the province in which it stood worshipped the god Sebek, or Set, whose tutelary animal was the crocodile, on which account both it and its inhabitants were hated and ignored, for Sebek was the Satan of Egyptian mythology.

¹ In the time of the Eleventh Dynasty the average height of the Nile inundation was nearly $7\frac{1}{4}$ yards above that of our times. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 167. This may in part be accounted for by the elevation of the land, since, by the Nile deposits.

Egypt had now, more than ever, become the centre of civilization. Its schools, under the priests, were famous, and intellectual life in every form abounded. Sculpture and painting reached high perfection, and books on all subjects were numerous; temples, pyramids, and tombs were extended in number; the country was everywhere improved by public works; boundaries, public and private, were minutely fixed; public registers kept; industries of all kinds multiplied; commerce with Libya, Palestine, and other regions covered the roads with caravans, and the waters with vessels; gold and minerals were largely obtained from Sinai, and the general prosperity attracted a great immigration of Libyans, Cushites, and Asiatic shepherd tribes.

But prosperity in the case of Egypt, with a religion so debased and a people enslaved, was no security against revolution, when the central despotism fell into weak hands, as it did ere long. Civil wars broke out and petty kingdoms rose, each claiming independence. Meanwhile, events on the Euphrates were destined to send a wave of invasion as far as the valley of the Nile, and substitute foreign for domestic rulers. The Chaldean empire of early ages had fallen, generations before, under the attacks of nations advancing from inner Asia—apparently, Scythians—and its populations had been largely forced to seek new homes. In the obscurity of a period so remote, little definite is known beyond the fact that the nomadic races of Western Asia and Syria, driven forward by pressure from behind, and attracted by the richness of the Nile Valley, united with the Phenician colonists of the northern coast, and having settled in ever greater numbers in the Delta, at last, taking advantage of the internal troubles of Egypt, rose against the Fourteenth native Dynasty, which then occupied Xoïs, its capital, in

the centre of the Delta, and overthrew it. For a time all was misery. Fierce and uncultured, the rough shepherd warriors harried and devastated the land. Towns and temples were alike pillaged, burned, or destroyed; the inhabitants who escaped massacre sinking, with their wives and children, into slavery. After the taking of Memphis, however, and the conquest of the whole Delta, the barbarians fortunately elected a king who proved able to re-establish a settled government.

Two dangers were to be guarded against: the possible efforts of the Egyptian princes at Thebes, in the south, to organize a national resistance; and the risk of invasion on the north by the tribes of Canaan, Syria and Elam. But the new king was equal to the occasion. Establishing a series of fortified posts in the Nile Valley, to the south, and guarding the Isthmus of Suez with a strong force, he secured himself from both perils. He further established at Avaris, or Pelusium, at the extreme north-east edge of the Delta,¹—on the line of the great Egyptian wall,—a vast entrenched camp, in which no fewer than 240,000 soldiers could be quartered. This he and his successors permanently maintained, as at once their supreme safeguard against invasion at the one point from which it could threaten, and as an inexhaustible depot from which to draw soldiers to defend the southern borders from attack by the native princes, and to overawe the population at large. Such vigour ere long naturally resulted in the conquest of all Egypt.

The Egyptians gave the name of Shous, or Shasou,—the “shepherds,”—to the nomadic tribes of Syria, the Bedouins of their times, and this name they applied to

¹ See the proofs of its position in the paper of Lepsius, *Monatsber. der k. Akad. der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, Mai, 1866, and Ebers' *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, pp. 82, 211.

these conquerors, distinguishing their king as the Hyk, or chief; whence their later Greek name of Hyksos. They were also known as "the archers," and as "the thieves" and "robbers." Nor can their invasion have been unmarked, at first, by terrible harshness, for the tradition of it wakes the bitter indignation of Manetho in the recital, twenty centuries later, and the hatred of the conquered population vented itself at the time by fixing the vilest epithets,—“the lepers,” “the pestilence,” “the accursed,”—on their masters. But the influences of the civilization around soon told on them, and ere long the conquerors were vanquished, as regarded their barbarism, by the conquered. Despite their greater political and military ability, they felt themselves inferior to their subjects in moral and intellectual culture. Their kings soon found that it was better to develop the country than to plunder it, and as they themselves could not manage the fiscal details of the revenue, Egyptian scribes were admitted into the departments of the exchequer, and of the public service. Ere long, the advancement in civilization was striking. The court of the Pharaohs reappeared round the Shepherd Kings, with all its pomp and its crowd of functionaries, great and small. The religion of the Egyptians, without being officially adopted, was tolerated, and that of the Hyksos underwent some modifications to keep it from offending, beyond endurance, the sensibilities of the worshippers of Osiris. Sutekh, the warrior god of Canaan, and the national god of the conquerors, was identified with the Egyptian god Set. Tanis became the capital of the country, and saw its palaces and temples rebuilt and increased in number. Sphinxes sculptured at this period enable us to realize the characteristics of the race; for the face differs widely from both the Egyptian and Semitic types. The eyes

are small, the nose large and arched, while at the same time comparatively flat; the chin is prominent, the lips thick, and the mouth depressed at the extremities. The whole countenance is rude, and the thick hair of an enormous wig, as it would appear, hangs round the head like a mane, and appears to bury the face.¹ The beard is worn long, in rows of small curls, but the upper lip is shaved. Such were the new conquerors, with their foreign lineaments, and their rough earnestness, who held Egypt in subjection for perhaps five hundred years.

It was apparently under one of this race, whose name has come down to us, that Joseph became grand vizier—an honour which a foreign Shepherd King would be more willing to show to a member of a shepherd tribe than a native Pharaoh would have been. Known as Apopi in Egypt, he was the Aphobis of the Greeks; and as he seems to have been the restorer of Tanis, and the king under whom its rows of sphinxes were set up, it is not unlikely that in their striking features we may have his own portrait.

Of this king, a papyrus in the British Museum fortunately preserves a few notices.² "It came to pass," says this precious document, "that the land of Egypt fell into the hands of the plague-like men, and there was no king in Upper Egypt. When Sekenen-Ra—the ruler—was king of the south land, the impure became masters of the fortress in the district of the Amu (the Semitic races of the Delta). Apopi was king in the city Avaris, and the whole land appeared before him with tribute; doing him service and delivering to him all the

¹ Mariette, *Lettre à M. le Vicomte de Rougé*, p. 9. Chabas, *Les Pasteurs*, p. 17.

² *Sallier Papyrus*, p. 1.

fair produce of the Delta. And Apopi chose for himself the god Set as his lord, and served no other god which was in Egypt. And he built for him a temple, in noble, enduring work. And when he appeared in the temple to celebrate a festival and to offer, he wore garlands as men do in the temple of Ra-Hormachuti." Determined to pick a quarrel with the Egyptian prince of Thebes, he had demanded that, like himself, he should give up the worship of his gods and honour Amon Ra alone; but Ra-Sekenen, while yielding all else, had declined to pledge himself to this. A new message, however, was now contrived and sent off by Apopi, on the advice of his "experts" or scribes, and delivered to the governor of Thebes, the city of the south. This dignitary, on the arrival of the messenger, who had hurried to him without resting day or night, asks him, "Who sent thee here to the south country? Why hast thou come as a spy?" "Then the messenger answered, 'King Apopi it is who sent me to thee, and he says "Give me up the well for cattle which is in the . . . of the land. . . ."'¹ Then the ruler of the south was troubled and knew not what to say to King Apopi." He nerved himself, however, and returned an answer, unfortunately lost, to the messenger, who then went back to Apopi's court. Meanwhile Ra-Sekenen² "called together the ancients and the nobles of the south country, and the chief men and captains, and told them the message which king Apopi had sent. And, behold, they cried out with one mouth: 'It is great wickedness!' Yet they knew not what

¹ Brugsch translates the words as referring to the stopping of a canal.

² There were three Ra-Sekenens, who also bore the name of Tau, and are known as Tau I., Tau II. the Great, and Tau III. the Brave.

answer to send, whether good or bad. Then King Apopi sent,"—but here the document abruptly ends.¹

In this glimpse of Egypt under the Hyksos we have apparently the beginning of an account of the great war of liberation, from the Egyptian side. Apopi is still all powerful, and sends a messenger to the sub-king of the native race in the south of Egypt, dictating to him as a master to a dependent; but the chief men round him resent such humiliation, and a flame of national enthusiasm is thus kindled, which ended in expelling the Hyksos from the valley of the Nile. All the Egyptian under-kings seem, after a time, to have taken part in this national uprising, which struggled on with sullen resolution for a hundred and fifty years. In the end "The Shepherds" were driven back at every point from their fortresses in Middle Egypt, and forced to make a stand under the walls of Memphis, which was taken after a fierce and bloody struggle. Expelled from the Delta, they gathered for a final effort to regain the ground they had lost, at their great entrenched camp at Avaris or Pelusium, on the frontier wall, at the extreme north-east of Egypt, and maintained themselves there for a long time against all the attacks of the Egyptians. Generations indeed passed before the siege was successful, but patient determination triumphed in the end, for Aahmes I., in the fiftieth year of his reign, at last stormed the city, and drove the enemy out of Egypt into Syria. The valley of the Nile was thus finally delivered from a foreign yoke, from the Cataracts to the Mediterranean, after a subjugation of at least 500 years.²

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 241. *Ebers*, *Ægypten*, p. 206. *Records of the Past*. vol. viii. p. 3.

² Maspero says "more than 600," p. 176. The authorities for this epoch are, amongst others, Lepsius, *Chronologie*. Maspero,

Strange to say, the narrative of one who took part in the closing scenes of this long struggle, and was present at the storming of Avaris and other Hyksos towns, has come down to us, and shows how unsettled the times of the Hebrew sojourn must have been throughout. Eighty years of oppression followed the birth of Moses, and many others may have preceded it; but before these, successive generations of the Hebrew settlers had seen the storms of war sweeping, now here, now there, over the land. It is quite possible, indeed, that they took sides more or less with the Shepherds, with whom they were connected by race, and perhaps this may have embittered the persecution to which they were subsequently exposed. A vigorous and warlike people, which had shown a leaning towards the hated foreigners, would be peculiarly dreaded by the new native dynasty, and specially obnoxious to it.

The story that has come down to us from this far-off age is that of Aahmes, "the chief of the Egyptian navy," or "Captain-General of Marines," and is written on the walls of his tomb on the east side of the river, above Thebes, in sight of the ancient city of El Kobs. The dead man had had a stirring and adventurous life, and wore no fewer than eight gold chains, the equivalents of our war medals, put round his neck by the Pharaoh, for his bravery in battle. He was born in the city of Eilethya, and was the son of a naval officer, in whose good ship, *The Calf*, young Aahmes made his first acquaintance with the service, in the reign of Aahmes I.; after whom, very likely, his father's loyalty had had him named. He was still only a lad, too young to be married,

Histoire Ancienne. Birch, *The Papyrus Abbott*. Chabas, *Les Pasteurs en Egypt.* *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. pp. 111, 222. *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. i. p. 265.

and was entered among the cadets. After a time, however, he took a wife, and settled; but the old spirit came on him again and he was appointed to a post on the ship called *The North*, to take part in the war against the Shepherd Kings. His special duty was complimentary to his birth and prowess, for it was to follow the king, on foot, when he went out in his chariot. The final siege of Avaris came on presently, and Aahmes fought so stoutly at it, before the Pharaoh, that he was promoted to the command of the man of war *Crowned in Memphis*. In this ship he saw service on lake Pazetku, near Avaris, and won his first golden collar of valour, by killing and cutting off the hand of an enemy in a hand-to-hand fight, mention being made of the fact to the head scribe, who reported it to Pharaoh. After that, a second battle took place in the same neighbourhood, and in it also he fought well and cut off a hand from another enemy, which secured him a second golden collar. Then came fighting at Takem, to the south of Avaris, and he carried off a living man, after a struggle in which he had to swim with his prisoner to a distant part of the shore so as to avoid the road to Avaris. This brought him a third collar, for it also was made known through the head scribe to the king. At the storming of Avaris he was even more fortunate, for he there took a grown-up man and three women, prisoners, and had them given to him as slaves by the Pharaoh. In the sixth year came the siege of the town Sharhana, which could not resist his Holiness the king, after the fall of Avaris. Two women prisoners and one hand of a slain enemy, rewarded his bravery, and these women also were given him as slaves. But now the Shepherds were finally crushed, and Aahmes found himself engaged in a war with the Phenician population of the sea coast of Palestine, who were ere long

subdued. The eastern frontier was forthwith protected against new invasions by a line of additional fortresses, and piping times of peace might have come, but that King Aahmes proclaimed war against the Nubians in the far south. Thither, however, we will not follow the story, beyond saying that Aahmes won more slaves, and got grants of land for his valour. Under Kings Amenophis I., and Thothmes I., he had as warlike a career, and was at last raised by the latter to the high rank of Admiral of the Fleet, or Captain-General. Fortunately, his last campaigns brought him back to regions more interesting to us, for war broke out against Syria. There, he was fortunate enough to attract the notice of the king, when he was at the head of his force, by carrying off a chariot of war, with its horses and the men in it, and leading them to him; his valour was recognised once more by the gift of his eighth collar.¹ Here his interesting story ends.

During the long dominion of the foreigners the temples had fallen into decay, but now that peace was restored, and Egypt once more free, the king, to prove his gratitude, began the work of restoring them in more than their original splendour. The deserted quarries in the Arabian hills were re-opened, and limestone blocks brought from them to rebuild the sanctuaries of Memphis, Thebes, and other cities—a rock tablet in the quarries still showing them on their way; each dragged on a kind of sledge by six yoke of oxen. But Egyptian temples were too vast to be quickly completed, for the inscription in that of Edfou shows that 180 years 3 months and 14 days elapsed between its foundation and its completion. The work of restoration, therefore, must have been going on as long as the Hebrews were in Egypt.

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 249. Page Renouf, in *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. pp. 7-10.

Before leaving the period of the Shepherd Kings,¹ a curious fact in connection with their exclusive worship of the god Set deserves notice. That god had been honoured from the earliest times in Egypt, having had a temple in Memphis as far back as the Fifth Dynasty, and abundant traces of the reverence paid him occurring in the times of the Fourth Dynasty, that is eight dynasties before the days of Abraham. But the name Sutekh or Set is the Egyptian word for Baal, and is represented by the same sign; a strange fact, which supports in the most striking way, from its incidental character, the statement of Genesis as to the common origin of the peoples of Egypt and Canaan.² “The comparative study of the form of the language of ancient Egypt;” says M. de Rougé, “the sacred traditions of a neighbouring people; and the fact that one and the same religion was common from the first to certain peoples of Syria and the Delta; all bring us back toward the primitive kindred of Mizraim and Canaan; a kindred which various traits indicate to us as also existing between these two races and their Arabian, Libyan, and Ethiopic neighbours.”³

Manetho's pictures of the wild ruin spread by the Hyksos over Egypt on their first arrival—the sacking of temples, burning of cities, and oppression of the people—have been fancied by modern students to be greatly exaggerated. It is at least certain that the Egyptians, including even the priests of the Theban god Amon, were accustomed, in the time of the Hyksos and after their expulsion, to give their children Semitic names,

¹ Hofmann has a long article in the *Studien u. Kritiken* (1839, pp. 393–348), to prove that the Hyksos were the Israelites.

² Tomkins, *Life and Times of Abraham*, p. 145. Brugsch, *Egypt*, vol. i. p. 212. *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 231.

³ De Rougé, *Six Prem. Dyn.*, p. 9.

borrowed from the language of the Shepherd hordes, and that they voluntarily offered homage to their god. The native Egyptian princes, who had lost their throne by the invasion, naturally hated them and strove to blacken their memory, but, in the opinion of Brugsch,¹ there are no traces of anything like a permanent and ineradicable abhorrence of them on the part of the nation, beyond the aversion of an exclusive and ceremonially strict race for a people counted "unclean."

The fall of the Shepherds introduced the Eighteenth Dynasty, of which Aahmes, or as he is sometimes called, Amosis, was the first king. He reigned twenty-five years, and was succeeded by his queen, as regent for their son. From her appearing in some cases in the paintings as black, it has been assumed that she was a negress,² but as she is represented in others with the usual yellow complexion of Egyptian women, it may be that the black is only introduced in her case, as it frequently is in similar ones, in allusion to her having passed to the dark regions of the grave.³ Her son Amenophis I., on his assuming the crown, continued his father's policy of extending the empire. The military spirit, roused by the long war of independence, developed itself, in fact, from the times of Aahmes, in a lust of foreign conquest. Long oppressed, the Egyptians now resolved, in their turn, to oppress. Vast numbers of the "Shepherds," preferring slavery in the valley of the Nile, to banishment to the desert or to other lands, had to bear the degradation which they had hitherto imposed on others—to hew the stones of the quarry and to mould the bricks of temples and cities; toils and humiliations

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. i. pp. 255 ff.

² *Birch*, *Egypt*, etc. p. 81. *Maspero*, p. 176.

³ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 279

which the Hebrews, and other races, had, sooner or later, also, to undergo. Outside the empire, expansion was most easy on the north-east ; the desert, and perhaps the poverty of the inhabitants, discouraging aggression on the south or west. To make future invasion impossible from Syria and the countries beyond, the Egyptian legions were marched into Palestine, as the high road to Asia. Henceforth, for five hundred years, the national records are little more than a roll of victories and conquests, from the sources of the Blue Nile to those of the Euphrates, over all Syria and Ethiopia. The Hebrew tribes in the Delta, became familiar with triumphal processions of generals and princes returning from the various seats of war. One day, the spoils of southern victories were seen, in long trains of negro prisoners, giraffes led in halters, chained apes and baboons, tame panthers and leopards. On another, the barbarians of the north, as they were called, were led along in similar triumphs, with strange headdresses, sometimes of the skins of wild beasts, the edges floating over their shoulders, and their own fair skins set off by painting or strange tatooing. A victory over the Rutenni in Syria, or the taking of some centre of the Syrian trade, on still another day, filled all mouths, or there had been a victory over the Libyans and their allies west of the Delta. The flourish of trumpets, and the rolling of drums in these grand military displays became familiar, and, doubtless, many of the sons of Israel were often among the noisy multitude that rent the air with their acclamations, drowning the measured chants of sacred choirs heading the regiments as they marched. It was a time of rapid fortunes to some, but of great suffering to the people, who had to bear the conscription for the endless wars. Aahmes, the son of a

sea-captain, could hope to return a great man, though he began as a humble cadet, but in the hut of the peasant there was mourning over the strong man fallen on a distant field.¹

The monuments fortunately preserve some details of these years, which further light up the period of the Hebrew sojourn, and help us to know what subjects were talked of in the cabins of the Tribes, while still on the Nile. The queen of Aahmes, they would hear, was proclaimed a goddess before her death, as founder of the new Eighteenth Dynasty, and her son Amenophis I. for the first time among Egyptian kings, had himself painted on the temples, in a wheeled chariot, drawn by horses.² He had also built a mighty temple in Thebes, and he waged wars in Ethiopia and Libya, but an interval of peace marked the closing years of his reign. Then came his son, Thothmes I., "the child of the god Thoth," the holy scribe of the gods, the first king of Egypt who carried its standards to the distant Euphrates. But he bore them also as far south as four degrees inside the tropic, or fully 700 miles south of the Mediterranean, where his presence is still recorded in rock tablets near Tombos. This far reaching glory was not without its effects at home. The plunder of Syria and of the south was succeeded by a steady flow of their wealth in the more peaceful channels of commerce. Richly laden ships floated down the Nile from the tropics, bearing cattle and rare animals, panther skins, ebony, costly woods, balsam, sweet smelling resins, gold and precious stones, and negroes in vast numbers, prisoners of war, now doomed to slavery. In the mines of Wawa, in Nubia,

¹ See *Maspero*, p. 179; also *Uarda*, *passim*.

² *Birch*, p. 82. The horse itself is first mentioned in the reign of Aahmes.

captives and slaves dug gold-bearing quartz from the rocks of the scorching gullies, and after crushing it in mills, with deadly toil washed out the particles of gold, under the eyes of Egyptian soldiers. The wretchedly barren Nubian valleys paid the penalty of their mineral riches in the misery of their people.¹ From Ethiopia the tide of war turned, next, against the north. Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria in the widest sense, felt the shock of invasions; to be repeated for five hundred years, as a war of vengeance against these countries, to wipe out the humiliation of Egypt in the times of the Shepherd Kings. Nothing would content Thothmes till he had "washed his heart," that is, cooled his anger, by a victory in Mesopotamia, and this he gained, after advancing triumphantly through Palestine, northwards. Nor are we to think of the Kheti or Hittites, and other tribes of Canaan and Syria whom he conquered, as inglorious foes; the varied and lavish booty taken by the Egyptians from them, as recorded in the monuments, reveals a high civilization and prosperity. Chariots of war, blazing with gold and silver; splendid coats of mail; weapons of all sorts, finely made; gold, silver, and brazen vases; household furniture of every kind, down to tent poles and footstools; with countless objects, besides, which only civilization could produce, disclose an amazing development of artistic skill and social refinement in Canaan and Western Asia, centuries before the Hebrew conquest under Joshua. Even their military organization taught Egypt lessons. Chariots of war with their pairs of horses, thenceforward took a prominent place in the Egyptian order of battle—the horse bearing on the monuments the Semitic name of Sus, and the charioteer the Semitic name of Kasan. The very arrangement and

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 289.

composition of the Egyptian army were more or less moulded after Canaanite and Syrian models.¹

Thothmes died early, after beginning a great temple at Thebes, which his illustrious son Thothmes III. was to extend and beautify beyond precedent. His favourite wife, Hashop, who was also his sister, had borne him a daughter and two sons, but the elder of these, Thothmes II., was cut off before he had reigned any length of time, though not before he had waged war, once more, on the peoples of the far south. Meanwhile Hashop, clever and energetic, had a series of royal tombs, the like of which she intended should never again be seen in Egypt, cut into the rocks near Thebes, at a height reached only by grand flights of steps, rising stage on stage; and there her father, Amenophis I., and her husband-brother were laid. But though now a widow, she had no thought of retiring from power. Throwing aside her woman's veil, she appeared in all the splendour of Pharaoh, as a born king, in man's attire, with the crown and insignia of royalty, and seated herself on the throne as sole ruler; putting her brother, Thothmes III., a minor, in virtual restraint. Once supreme, her first act was to efface all traces of her brother-husband from the monuments, replacing them by her own name and that of her father—she taking that of Ma Ka Ra and affecting the title of king. The magnificent temples already begun were carried on vigorously, but this did not satisfy the bright intelligence of the man-woman. She planned a

¹ Professor Sayce in a letter to *The Times*, January 23rd, 1880, and in the *Trans. of the Soc. of Bib. Arch.*, July 6th, 1880, has shown that the Hittite empire at one time extended from the Euphrates to the shores of the Grecian Archipelago, at the west extremity of Asia Minor. It was thus, in its day, the greatest power in the world, so far as we know.

voyage of discovery to the land of "Punt."¹ A fleet of sea-going vessels was prepared for the long and dangerous venture, which was safely accomplished, down the Red Sea and along the hitherto unknown coast of Africa, as far as Cape Guardafui, at the extreme point where the coast turns directly south. Pictures on Hashop's Temple near Thebes still remain, describing the wonders of the enterprise; long inscriptions adding curious details. The adventurers saw the terraced mountains on which incense trees grew. The people lived in huts built on piles, a ladder being needed to enter. Cocoa-nut palms lent a friendly shade; strange birds showed themselves on the branches, and stately herds of cattle reposed around. Rich treasures in stones, plants and animals rewarded the voyagers, who returned with their ships safely, bearing thirty-one incense trees in great tubs, samples of the woods of the country, heaps of incense, ebony, objects in ivory inlaid with gold, from Arabia and elsewhere; paint for the eyes; giraffes, leopards, bulls, hunting leopards, dog-headed apes, long-tailed monkeys, greyhounds, leopard skins, gold, copper, and much else, besides a number of the natives of the country with their children. A grand ceremonial attended their return, particulars of which we may be sure circulated through Goshen, as elsewhere. The treasures brought home were meanwhile presented to the god Amon, under whose auspices the voyage had been undertaken. A new festival, moreover, was instituted in his honour, the king-queen showing herself in her richest attire, "a spotted leopard skin with copper clasps on her shoulders, and her limbs perfumed like fresh dew." The holy bark of Amon was carried on the shoulders of

¹ Punt or Pount seems connected with Puni or Pœni—the red men—the Phenicians—as originally men of Cush.

priests, amidst music and song, and a long procession of court officials, warriors, great people and priests approached his temple: the priests bearing offerings; the warriors peaceful branches; and the vast multitude shouting for joy.

Hashop's reign was splendid, but, ere long, she had to allow her brother, the great Thothmes III., to share the royal honours with her, which he did for twelve years.

During his long reign of fifty-four years in all, Thothmes proved the Egyptian Alexander the Great, and, moreover, left behind him a world of monuments, from the grandest temples to distant rock tablets, inscribed with his name and deeds. Egypt, indeed, became the chief power of the world for a time. Its arms were carried to the verge of the then known earth, south, east and west. Countless riches were laid up in its temples, and commerce flowed into it from all lands. Inscriptions on the grand temple halls of Karnak recorded, as Tacitus informs us, "the tributes imposed on the nations; the weight in silver and gold, the number of weapons and horses, the presents in ivory and sweet scents, given to the temples; how much wheat and things of all kinds each nation had to provide; in truth not less great than at present the power of the Parthian or Roman might imposes."

This great Pharaoh had to toil through more than thirteen campaigns, during twenty years, before he had gained his ends. The tributary nations had not only refused their payments during the reign of Hashop, but had leagued together against Egypt, and needed to be subjugated afresh. Town after town had to be stormed; river after river crossed; country after country traversed. The first efforts were directed against the kings and chiefs of Palestine, and ended in their complete over-

throw at a battle on the plain of Esdraelon. The fugitives made for the fortress of Megiddo, which was presently stormed, active resistance being thus finally put down. A rich booty rewarded the victors.¹ Silver, gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise and alabaster, jars of wine, flocks for the use of the army, chariots plated with gold, an ark of gold, 924 chariots, suits of brazen armour, 200 suits of armour for the soldiery, 502 bows, 7 poles of the chief's pavilion plated with silver, 1,949 bulls, 22,500 goats, besides gems, gold dishes and vases; a great cup, the work of Syria; other vases for drinking, having great stands; swords, gold and silver in rings, a silver statue with the head of gold; seats of ivory, ebony, and cedar, inlaid with gold; chairs, footstools, large tables of ivory and cedar, inlaid with gold and precious stones; a sceptre inlaid with gold; statues of the Canaanitish king, of ebony inlaid with gold, the heads being of gold; vessels of brass; an infinite quantity of clothing; 280,000 bushels of corn reaped from the plain of Megiddo, and a vast number of prisoners, who henceforth became slaves, are comprised in the long enumeration. Nor was this all. The tribute of the Rutenni, or Syrians, is given as including a king's daughter, adorned with gold—as a wife to Thothmes. It, also, comprised ornaments of silver, gold, and lapis lazuli, slaves male and female, a hundred gold chariots, a chariot of silver inlaid with pure gold, four chariots covered with plates of gold, six chariots of copper, the chest of agate; 1,200 oxen, 104 pounds weight of silver dishes and beaten out silver plates, a gold breastplate inlaid at the edge with lapis lazuli, a brass suit of armour inlaid with gold, and many others of a plainer kind, 823 large jars of incense, 1,718 of wine and honey, much ivory, a vast quantity of the best fire-wood

¹ Annals of Thothmes III., *Records of the Past*, vol. ii. p. 45.

for the army, and a quantity of wheat so great that it could not be measured. Some of these particulars may have already been given, but this fuller list shows still more vividly the remarkably advanced civilization of Palestine and the neighbouring countries in these early ages.¹

The return of Thothmes to Egypt after his Palestine campaigns was a famous event in local history, and must have stirred the Hebrew community hardly less than it did their fellow-countrymen, the native Egyptians. The great triumphal procession at Thebes would probably be rehearsed first in Lower Egypt, which was always regarded as a separate "world," and, if so, many an Israelite would wonder at the sight of the captive princes,



EGYPTIAN WAR PRISONERS.

their children and their subjects, following the young hero: the numberless horses, oxen, goats, and curious animals; the strange productions of the conquered lands, in endless variety; the splendour and richness of the treasures of gold and silver vessels and works of art; the precious stones, magnificent robes and furniture; the costly woods; the grand chariots, statues, coats of mail, and much else, which passed before him.

The addition to the Great Temple at Karnak of the

¹ The list is from *Records of the Past*, vol. ii. pp. 45 ff., and *Brugsch*, vol. i. pp. 327 ff. It is engraved on the walls of part of the Great Temple of Karnak.

famous Hall of Pillars, still standing, was ere long begun, as a royal thankoffering to Amon. Three "feasts of victory," of five days each, at once rewarded the army and honoured the god, and the priests were made loyal by the vast offerings presented.

Thothmes III. undertook no fewer than fourteen campaigns against the inhabitants of Western Asia, between the twenty-third and fortieth years of his reign; Palestine and Syria bearing the brunt of most, but one, at least, extending to Mesopotamia; if not, indeed, as Dr. Birch thinks possible, even to India. Of all these, exact records were inscribed on the walls of the temple at Karnak, with wonderful pictures of the chief incidents, and even of the productions and animals of the different regions conquered. Water-lilies of gigantic size, plants like cactuses, all sorts of trees and shrubs, leaves, flowers, and fruits; oxen and calves; a strange creature with three horns, herons, sparrow-hawks, geese and doves are intermingled in the great battle-pictures, to give an idea of the animals and vegetation of the countries in which triumphs had been won. Nor were paintings and inscriptions the only memorials of the great conqueror. Poets sang his praises and those of the god Amon, who had given him the victory: a custom familiar for ages in Egypt, before Moses and the children of Israel sang their hymns in honour of the true God, for the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea.¹

The temples, palaces, colossal statutes, obelisks, and public buildings, erected or restored by Thothmes in every part of Egypt, have mostly perished, but the Great Temple at Karnak and some of his colossi still remain, so grand in their decay as to fill the mind with awe. What wonder if his idolatrous contemporaries

¹ Birch's *Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 87. *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 370.

already worshipped him as a divine being while alive, and transferred to him after his death the still higher honours of a god passed to heaven? The victorious conqueror and ruler of the whole world as then known: "The beautifier of the land"; "The always fortunate;" his name was inscribed on thousands of little images and small stone scarabæi, which were used as rings; and its invocation was held to be a charm against wicked spirits and magicians.

Amenhotep II., the son of Thothmes, was a man of remarkable powers, but his fame is obscured by his father's greatness. He, too, led the Egyptian armies to Mesopotamia, taking Palestine by the way, and also to Nubia in the south; filling the earth with blood as his father had done, and draining the country of its sons. Thothmes IV., the next king, was no less energetic, for his campaigns embraced twenty-two degrees of longitude, from Mesopotamia in the north, to Ethiopia in the far south. It is worthy of note that the Great Sphinx, beside the pyramids, having already, thus early, been almost buried in the drifting sand, was cleared by him, in consequence of a dream apparently directing him to do so. The whole incident is curious. Thothmes had been hunting the gazelle, and holding a spear-throwing at targets, for his pleasure, near Memphis. But as noon approached he had let his servants retire for rest, and had himself gone to the temple of Sokar in the necropolis, to bring to the god Hormakhu¹ and the goddess Ramni, an offering of "the seeds of the flowers on the heights," and to pray to the great mother Isis. The sphinx,² close at hand, was held to be the likeness of

¹ The sphinx, worshipped as "The Sun on the Horizon."

² The sphinx is a figure of an animal form with a human head, hewn out of the living rock, so huge that there was a temple

Kephra, or Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid, whom the flattery of the multitude worshipped as a god—indeed, as the greatest god of these parts; “To whom the inhabitants of Memphis and of all towns in its district raise their hands, to pray before his countenance and to offer rich sacrifices.” “On one of these days the prince in his wandering had stretched himself in the shade of the great god (the sphinx), when sleep overtook him, and he dreamed, exactly at noon, and it seemed as if the great god spoke to him with his own mouth, as a father speaks to his son, in these words: ‘Behold me, look at me, thou, my son Thothmes. I am thy father Hormakhu (the sphinx), Kephra (Cheops), Ra (the sun), Toutm (the setting sun). The kingdom shall be given to thee, and thou shalt wear the white crown and the red crown on the throne of the earth-god Set, the youngest among the gods. The earth shall be thine in its length and in its breadth, as far as the light of the eye of the Lord of All shines. Plenty and riches shall be thine. . . . The sand of the district in which I have my existence has covered me up. Promise me that thou wilt do what I in my heart wish; then will I acknowledge that thou art my son and my helper.’”¹ After this, Thothmes awoke, and resolved to obey the dream, which he did forthwith, by clearing away the sand from the sphinx. Such a significant dream, told of one of the kings who reigned during the Hebrew sojourn on the Nile, reminds us of those in the story of Joseph.

Thothmes IV. was succeeded by Amenhotep III., a king well nigh as great as Thothmes III., if we may judge from the number and beauty of the monuments he

between its fore paws. It is 190 feet in length and of proportionate height, but is in great part buried under the rolling sand of the desert.

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. i. pp. 415–417.

has left behind him, and from the contemporary records that have survived. Mesopotamia on the north, and the land of the negroes on the south, were the boundaries of his empire. Strong and courageous, in his visits to



THE COLOSSI AT THEBES. STATUES OF AMENHOTEP III.

Mesopotamia he delighted in hunting, and records that he speared with his own hand no fewer than two hundred and ten lions. In war, his greatest deeds were performed in Ethiopia, the California of those ages. Two colossal

statues of him, which still rise seventy feet above the sand at Thebes, stood originally in front of a great temple of Amon which he built, but which is now entirely gone. Besides these, he left temples, rows of sphinxes, and vast rock tombs as his magnificent memorials. Above all, his wise sayings were treasured for ages. After his reign of thirty-five years came his son Amenhotep IV., "the long lived," whose mother, the darling wife of his father, had been neither of royal blood nor even an Egyptian. This invalidated his title to the throne, and roused the jealousy of the priestly corporations against him, zealous as they were for the strictest observance of the laws of royal succession, since the Pharaohs were not only kings but gods. He had, moreover, learned—perhaps from his foreign mother—to slight the worship of Amon, the great God of Thebes, and of the other Egyptian gods. Hence, though he built temples to them,—he worshipped only the "One God of Light"—the sun—in honour of whom he went even so far as to change his name to Khunaten—"the splendour of the sun's disk." He further erased the name of Amon and of his divine wife Mut from the monuments, and proclaimed himself "a high priest of Hormakhu," and a "friend of the sun's disk." The cry of "The Church in danger" rose from the priests of the dishonoured gods, and led to a rebellion, on account of which Amenhotep removed his capital from Thebes to Middle Egypt. There a new city—Khu-aten, the city of Aten, the sun—was forthwith built; with a grand temple to the sun-god Aten, in a foreign style, and palaces and public buildings, nearly all of granite, laboriously brought from Assouan or Syene. Though soft and feminine in his features, and of a weak unmanly figure, Amenhotep was far from being either weak or irresolute in character. Before leaving

Thebes, he had compelled the dignitaries of the empire to unite with labourers and masons in building a huge pyramid of sandstone in honour of the "God of Light"; the noblest lords, including even the specially illustrious "fan-bearers," being required to play the humble part of overseers of the workmen who cut, shipped, and put together the stone. But he was as tender and faithful in his domestic relations as he was proud and stern towards his opponents, and clung zealously to his new faith; which, indeed, was much purer and loftier than the creed he had discarded. His rupture with the priests must have been the great topic of the times in Goshen and over all the land, but it did not shake his throne, for he died in peace—leaving seven daughters but no son—after a reign, not without glory from the deeds of his armies abroad, and famous for his honest worth at home.

The husband of the third daughter of this king succeeded him on his throne, and has had his memory preserved by a remarkable painting in the tomb of a Theban contemporary. It shows us the king on his throne receiving the homage and tribute of the nations subject to him. Richly laden ships bring the gifts and dues of the negro populations, and with them appears a negro queen, who has come on a chariot drawn by oxen, surrounded by her slaves and officials, to visit the Pharaoh and lay rich presents at his feet, as the Queen of Sheba in a later age came to Solomon.

The brown-skinned kings of Palestine are also painted in rich dresses, their black hair elaborately curled; offering to Pharaoh Syrian horses, led by red-bearded men of low stature; costly and beautiful works of their country, in silver, gold, blue stone and green stone; and all kinds of jewels; as an expression of their wish for peace, and of their respect. But Tut-ank-Amon, as the king called

himself, was only an illegitimate pretender, for his queen, through her mother, was not of the pure blood of the Pharaohs; so that, although he returned to the old faith, and thus gained the outward support of the priests, he failed to secure their warm loyalty. Hence, when he died after a short reign, without a legitimate successor, the throne was seized by Khunaten's former Master of the Horse—"The Holy Father Ai," who seems to have made a remarkably good king. Gossip about him must have been rife from the Mediterranean to Nubia,—how his wife had been nurse to king Khunaten, the heretic; how this had raised Ai, already a lord of the court and a "holy father" of the highest grade, to even higher dignities; how he had been successively "fan-bearer on the right hand of the king, and superintendent of the whole stud of Pharaoh," and "the royal scribe of justice." Nor had his wife fared less generously, for rumour would justly recount how "the high nurse, the nourishing mother of the godlike one, the dresser of the king" increased in riches and honour, year by year. Wisely orthodox, Ai had the support of the priests, and was allowed by them to prepare a tomb for himself amongst those of the kings at Thebes. As the Pharaoh, his armies preserved the wide limits of the empire, and even won great victories, but he had no heirs, and the succession to the throne was once more a difficulty at his death. Another Pharaoh had to be discovered, and the good fortune fell in this case on a person who had no connection with royalty except his having married a sister of the queen of Amenhotep III. His name, however, helped him, for it was Horemhib, or Horus, one of the great gods. An inscription records the strange steps of his elevation. In his youth he had the happiness of being presented to the Pharaoh, who named him

“guardian of the kingdom.” “In all his deeds and ways,” he tells us, “he followed in the path of the gods Thoth and Ptah, justice and truth, and they were his shield and his protection on earth, to all eternity.” He was afterwards raised to the great dignity of the Adōn of the land, and held the office for many years. This was the position granted to Joseph, and hence the honours paid the son of Jacob may be gathered from those shown to Horemhib in the same office. “The great men at the court bowed before him, and the kings of foreign nations of the south and north came before him, and stretched out their hands at his approach, and praised his soul, as if he had been god. His authority was greater than that of the king in the sight of mortals, and all wished him prosperity and health.”

His adoption as the crown prince of the land followed, and, next, his selection for the throne, after the death of “The Holy Father.” An inscription detailing the incidents of his coronation throws light on the relations of the priesthood to the Pharaohs and their immense influence in Egypt. “The noble god Amon (that is, his priests, the most powerful corporation in the land) gave command to conduct the god Horus (the intended king) to Thebes . . . to deliver him his royal office and to establish it for the term of his life.” Then came a grand coronation procession, and “Amon Ra was moved with joy.” The daughter of the late king was forthwith given to him as queen. . . . “Then went Amon (that is, his image was carried by the priests) with his son (the new king) before him, to the hall of kings, to set his double crown on his head. There the gods (that is, the choirs of their priests) cried out: ‘We will to invest him with his kingdom; we will to bestow on him the royal attire of the sun god Ra; we will to praise

Amon in him. . . .’ And the great name of this godlike one was settled and his title recorded.”¹

“After this festival in the southern country was finished, Amon, the king of the gods (that is, the priests bearing the image of Amon with them) went in peace to Thebes, and the king went down the river in his ship, like an image of the god Hormakhu. Thus he had taken possession of the land, as was the custom. He renewed the dwellings of the gods (the temples.)² He had all their images re-sculptured, each as it had been before. He set them up in their temple, and he had one hundred images made, one for each of them, of like form, and of all kinds of costly stones. He visited the cities of the gods, which lay as heaps of rubbish in the land, and had them restored. . . . He took care of their daily festival of sacrifice, and of all the vessels of the temples, of gold and silver. He provided the temples with holy persons and singers, and with the best of the bodyguards, and he presented to them arable land and cattle, and supplied them with all kinds of provision which they required, to sing thus, each morning, to the sun-god Ra: ‘Thou hast made the kingdom great for us in thy son, who is the consolation of thy soul, king Horemhib. . . .’” The great pyramid raised by the heretic king Khunaten was soon after destroyed, its stones being taken to raise an addition to the temple of Amon, and thus the triumph of the priests was at last complete.³

With Horemhib expired the Seventeenth Dynasty. The Eighteenth was that under which the oppression of the Hebrews, and their deliverance, took place, but both were still some generations distant.

¹ Hymns in which the Pharaoh was adored as the sun-god are still extant.

² *Pap. Anastasi*, II. v. 6.

³ *Brugsch*, vol. i. pp. 462-473.



CHAPTER III.

THE OPPRESSION IN EGYPT.

OF the history of the Jews in Egypt we know nothing directly except in its last period, and even of that we have only a few brief and fragmentary notices. They evidently, however, by degrees laid aside, to a large extent, their tent life as wandering shepherds, and applied themselves in some cases to agriculture; digging canals from the east branch of the Nile to water their fields: in others to the various trades and arts of Egypt; and thus passed from a lower to a higher state of social development. Reuben, Manasseh and Gad, indeed, alone clung to the old shepherd life after the Exodus.

No country in these early ages was so far advanced in civilization as Egypt; none could boast so grand a history; such far reaching power; such splendour of architecture; such knowledge of arts and sciences; such royal magnificence in its government, or such accumulated wealth in its national treasury and in the hands of its nobles and priests. To use the words of Ewald, Egypt—like Athens and Rome in later ages, in their relations to the northern races—was a magnet which attracted or drove from it the less cultured peoples round—a school for wandering, conquering, or conquered nationalities, from which none went away as they had

come.¹ A community settled in it, as the Hebrews had been, for over four hundred years, must have insensibly caught more or less the modes of thought and special ideas predominant on all sides round them. Above all, they must have been largely influenced by the strange religion prevailing. Lofty and philosophical in theory or in the secret interpretation of the initiated; splendid in its ritual and temples, and universally honoured in the land; it had doubtless much to attract. Traces of the great primeval revelation of the One living and only God still survived,² though veiled and confused by the polytheism which had sprung up. Thus in a hymn to the god Amen,³ we find the lines:—

“One only art Thou, Thou Creator of beings,
And Thou only makest all that is created.

He is one only, Alone, without equal,
Dwelling alone in the holiest of holies.”

A few among the higher priests doubtless whispered, as a mystery trusted only to themselves, the existence of this One only God, self-existent, “His own Father and Son,” “the To-day, Yesterday, and To-morrow,” the “I Am whom I am;”⁴ but these glimpses of the august truth were so thickly veiled and shaded by the countless and varied forms of the Egyptian pantheon, as to elude

¹ Quoted in Uhlemann's *Israeliten und Hyksos*, p. 2.

² *Durch Gosen*, p. 528. *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 45.

³ *Bulaq Papyri*, p. 17. Translated by Goodwin, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. p. 250. *Records of the Past*, vol. ii. p. 129. It has been translated also by Grebaut and Stern. See, also, *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 45.

⁴ See this name, afterwards rightly assumed by Jehovah as due only to Him—quoted from the hieroglyphics, in Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 528, if, indeed, his interpretation be right.

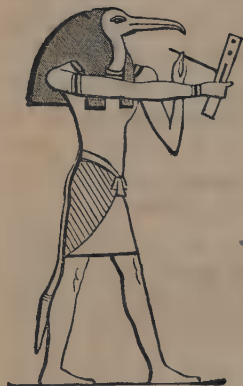
the recognition or comprehension of the multitude. In this very hymn indeed, Amen is said to be begotten by Ptah, the local god of Memphis. But to breathe even this confused vision of the truth beyond the small circle of the instructed few was an impiety, to be severely punished.¹ To the world at large in the Nile Valley, there were seven gods of the highest rank—Ra, the sun-god, the great national divinity, and Osiris and his family. From these had emanated a second grade of twelve gods, at whose head stood the moon-god Thoth, and from these again, a third, of thirty demi-gods.² But all these divinities took so many names and forms of both sexes, that the mind could not retain more than a few. Nor was this the worst. From the earliest ages, it had been the strange custom in Egypt to regard certain beasts, birds, fishes, and even insects as the symbols of particular gods.³ The crocodile, the goat, the sheep, the scarabæus beetle, the ox, the dog, the dog-faced ape, the shrew mouse, the cat, the wolf, the ichneumon, the lion, the hippopotamus, the ibis, some serpents, the sparrow-hawk, some fishes, and some vegetables, were sacred in wider or narrower districts, and although perhaps regarded by the educated or reflecting few as only symbols, were worshipped by the multitude as in some way divine. Offerings were presented to the sacred animals; priesthoods maintained in their honour; magnificent temples built for their reception; grand festivals held in their praise, and public lamentations made at their death; whilst to kill one of them was a capital crime. They were regarded as incarnations in which the particular god had veiled himself, to watch the better from this disguise the lives

¹ *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 46.

² Lepsius, *Ægypten*, Herzog, vol. i. p. 142.

³ J. E. Müller, in *Herzog*, vol. xvi. p. 49.

of his worshippers and the current of events. Clement of Alexandria aptly expresses the feeling of the outside world towards this strange religion. "The holy places of the temples," says he, "are hidden by great veils of cloth of gold. If you advance towards the interior of the building to see the statue of the god, a priest comes to you with a grave air, chanting a hymn in the Egyptian language, and lifts a corner of the gorgeous curtain to show you the divinity. But what do you see? A cat, a crocodile, a serpent, or some other dangerous animal.



THE GOD THOTH. THE SCRIBE
OF THE GODS.

The god of the Egyptians appears; it is a beast tumbling about on a carpet of purple." The multitude, ever incapable of refined distinctions between the idol or symbol and the god which had veiled himself in its outward form, paid divine honours directly to the sacred bird or beast. Nothing more degrading than such a monstrous faith could be conceived. Thus, the people of Thebes worshipped the crocodile, which was killed as hateful farther up the Nile. A

fine specimen having been caught, the priests taught it to eat from their hands, and carefully tended it. Golden earrings were hung in its ears and bracelets set on its forefeet.¹ Strabo gives an account of a visit to one. "Our host," says he, "took cakes, broiled fish, and a drink prepared with honey, and then went towards the lake"²

¹ *Herod.*, ii. 69.

² The sacred lake in the temple grounds, made for the divine crocodile.

with us. The brute lay on the bank, whither the priests went to it. Two of them then opened its jaws, and a third put into its mouth, first the cakes, then the fish, and finally they poured the drink down its throat. After this, the crocodile shambled into the water and swam to the bank on the other side. Another stranger having arrived with a similar offering, the priests took it, made the circuit of the lake, and having reached the crocodile, gave it to him in the same way.”¹ It was not uncommon for rich people to spend immense sums on a splendid funeral of a sacred cat,² dog, or ram;³ and so zealous were the multitude in their worship, that even so late as a century and a half before Christ, a Roman living in Alexandria, having by accident killed a cat, was seized by the crowd, on the fact being known, and put to death on the spot, though he was a Roman citizen, and though the king, who dreaded Rome and trembled for his crown, implored them to spare the unfortunate man’s life.⁴



SETEKH-RA.

Some of these beast-gods were only locally famous; others were honoured by the whole country. The ram was honoured at Thebes, where the great god Amon had a ram’s head. At Mendes, in the heart of the Hebrew

¹ *Strabo*, xvii. 1. ² *Eine Ägypt. Königst.*, vol. ii. pp. 51, 212.

³ *Diodorus*, i. 84.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 83. See, also, another case, vol. i. p. 15.

district, the goat was sacred to the god Binebtat, who was represented with a goat's head and legs. His worship, in keeping with his symbol, was wildly fanatical, and hateful for its orgies of lust and impurity.¹ At Kynopolis, the dog; at Lycopolis, the wolf, and perhaps the jackal; at Bubastis, the cat; at Tochompso, the crocodile was worshipped. Every household, moreover, had its sacred bird, which it fed during its life and buried with the family after its death, when it had been carefully embalmed.² The goddess Pecht had the head of a cat, Hathor that of a cow, and Osiris was worshipped under an obscene symbol.

The goat of Mendes was "the soul of Osiris;" the calf Mnevis of On, "the soul of Ra," the great sun-god. The phoenix, ■ fabulous bird, was an incarnation of Osiris, as the ibis was of Thoth and the sparrow-hawk of Horus. But the ox Apis, at Memphis, not far from Goshen, was the supreme expression of the divinity in an animal form. He was regarded as an incarnation of Osiris and Ptah, together, and hence was honoured as at once "the second life of Ptah," and "the soul of Osiris."³ He had no father, but a ray of light quickened him in the womb of his cow mother which henceforth could bear no other calf.⁴ It was required that he be black, with a triangular white spot on his forehead; the figure of a vulture or eagle with outspread wings on his back, and that of a scarabæus on his tongue. Such marks, it need hardly be said, never appeared, but the priests had symbols which they accepted in their stead,

¹ The Hebrews seem to have been drawn away by this idol and to have sacrificed to him. Lev. xvii. 7. Deut. xxxii. 17. In these texts the word "devils," is to be translated "goats."

² Creuzer's *Symbolik*, p. 158.

³ *Strabo*, xvii. 1.

⁴ *Herod.*, iii. 28.

as astronomers fancifully recognize the outline of a dragon, a bear, or a lyre in the positions of the stars of different constellations.¹ He was not allowed, however, to live more than twenty-five years. At the end of this period he was drowned in the sacred fountain of the Sun, and his embalmed body was then laid with great public solemnities in a magnificent tomb.²

With all this degradation, however, the Egyptian religion had the glory of maintaining the immortality of the soul as one of its most cherished doctrines, and with this the resurrection of the body; though they linked the continued existence of the spirit to that of the frail tenement in which it had lived on earth.

In the midst of such an idolatry the Hebrews could for themselves see its results. Cherishing for generations the lofty faith of Abraham, they must have kept very much apart while the pure creed of the patriarchs still held its ancient place in their hearts.

They saw the race which honoured beast-gods sunk into degradation, and treated as slaves by their kings and the higher castes. There was no reverence for man as man, no recognition of the personal freedom of the population at large. The Pharaohs boasted of descent from the gods and were worshipped even during their life as



THE GOD AMON.

¹ Mariette, *Bulletin Arch. de l'Athénæum*, 1855, p. 54.

² Page 16.

divine, and the whole land and all the people in it belonged to them. If a portion of the soil were left to the peasant it was an act of grace. There was, in fact, no "people" in Egypt; only slaves. They were forced to toil, at the royal will, in raising temples, pyramids, and cities, under the eyes of remorseless "drivers." Nor was any sympathy for the suffering multitude shown by the priests, who steadily ranged themselves on the side of power. Thus, sunk in political degradation, the



ANUBIS.

multitude sought compensation in immorality. Gentle and patient as they were, the Egyptians were also specially impure. With such a worship, they gave the reins to the baser passions, for why should a man be better than his gods? Unnatural vices prevailed on every side.¹ Universal and open impurity marked their great yearly religious festivities at Bubastis and Dendera,² at which 700,000 people sometimes were assembled.

It would have been astonishing if, amidst such corruption, the Hebrews had remained uncontaminated. Yet the wonder is they were not worse than they proved. Their independence and separate nationality, long respected, doubtless shielded them in part, yet they had,

¹ *Herod.*, ii. 46. *Lév.* xviii. 3 ff. "After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt shall ye not do." See especially *ver.* 23. Comp. with *Herod.*, ii. 60.

² Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 483.

as a people, lapsed into a very low spiritual condition when Moses appeared. The name of the God of their fathers had been forgotten,¹ and they had "defiled themselves with the idols of Egypt,"² and worshipped a calf, perhaps the symbol of the god Mnevis, under the very shadow of Sinai. They would appear also, as already said, to have sacrificed to the sacred goat Mendes,³ which was so much honoured in Egypt that the whole land mourned its death. Indeed, after the conquest of Canaan they still clung to the worship of Egyptian gods.⁴ Nor was idolatry the only evil learned by their long sojourn on the Nile. Ezekiel, so late as the time of the Captivity, reminds them how even their maidens had yielded to the impurities of Egypt, and had given themselves up to shameless sin.⁵

But if, on the one hand, the Hebrews were thus contaminated by the religion and morals of the Nile Valley; on the other hand, they gained much in their social and national development by residence there. Surrounded by the highest existing culture, they gradually became fitted for independent national life. The sciences, arts, and mode of life of their neighbours re-appear more or less in their future history; in the medical knowledge of Israel, its civilization, its laws and customs, and even its knowledge of writing. Arithmetic, geometry, and acquaintance with the heavens were unknown to them before entering Egypt; and arts, of which no trace exists in the patriarchal times, appear among them immediately after the Exodus. We find them then executing delicate work in gold, silver, wood and stone; skilled in weaving,

¹ Exod. iii. 13.

² Ezek. xx. 7, 8.

³ Page 64, n.

⁴ Josh. xxiv. 23.

⁵ Ezek. xxiii. 8.

embroidering and dyeing,¹ and able to cut, set and engrave precious stones.²

Nothing is told us of their history in Egypt, but an allusion in Chronicles³ may refer to an unsuccessful attempt to break away from the Nile before the days of Moses. Their families grew into twelve, thirteen, or fourteen tribes,⁴ and these maintained a steadfast relationship through common descent and traditions. To the Reubenites, as descendants of Jacob's eldest son, the leadership would, under ordinary circumstances, have been assigned, but the patriarch, in his dying words, virtually deposed their forefather from the rights of the first-born. "Bubbling over like water," in his unbridled passions, he had "defiled his father's couch," and "would have no pre-eminence" such as his birthright promised.⁵ The Reubenites, as has been noticed already, were and remained nomadic shepherds, as also did the Gadites and the Eastern half-tribe of Manasseh, with whom similarity of life united them; but even among these Reuben took no foremost place. In the same way, the next eldest

¹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 14. Uhlemann, *Die Israeliten*, p. 3.

² Proved by the Urim and Thummim, the stones on the high priest's shoulders, and on his breastplate, etc. These were engraved with the names of the tribes. But the mention of a signet ring (Gen. xxxviii. 18) may imply the knowledge of stone engraving at an earlier period.

³ 1 Chron. vii. 21.

⁴ The number of the tribes is usually given as twelve, Ephraim and Manasseh being reckoned as two, and Levi not counted. Manasseh however broke up into two, that on the east and that on the west of the Jordan, and hence there were thirteen tribes, or with Levi, fourteen. Graetz thinks the number of offerings in Numbers xvii. 13,—thirteen,—refers to thirteen tribes, (*Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 11), but if so, the fourteen offerings that follow would include Levi, and make fourteen tribes.

⁵ *Ges. Thes.*, 1098b, 645a. *Mühlau u. Volck*, under the word *Yathar*.

tribe, Simeon, remained always subordinate, and ended by being virtually lost in that of Judah. Over them, also, for their lawless conduct at Shechem, their father's words hung like a blight, for "their swords had been instruments of violence."¹ "O my soul," the dying patriarch had added, of both Simeon and Levi, in this connection, "come not thou into their council; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united; for in their anger they slew men, and in their selfwill they houghed oxen."² Both, as he predicted, were, literally, "divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel." Judah, although in later times the most powerful and noted of all the tribes, was long in taking the leadership, which in Egypt and for ages afterwards, was naturally held by that of Joseph; including from the first its two great branches,—Ephraim, long supreme as the representative of its great forefather, and spoken of as "Israel,"—and Manasseh, which separated into the eastern and western branches of Machir and Gilead. The other tribes were always subordinate: Benjamin, Issachar and Zebulon connecting themselves in a measure with the descendants of Joseph; Dan, Asher and Napthali choosing a more isolated life, comparatively apart from their brethren. The tribe of Levi held a peculiar position. Assuming the moral leadership in Egypt, it afterwards rose to be the priestly and ecclesiastical head of the nation.

The tribal constitution of these various clans, in Egypt, was simple. They had no common chief, but lived under the rule of their own elders or sheiks. This simple patriarchal form of government they retained in common with their related nations, the tribes of Edom and those descended from Ishmael,³ and with the Horites—or

¹ *Ges. Thes.*, 672 b.

² Lit. translation, Gen. xlix. 6.

³ Gen. xxv. 16; xxxvi. 10, 11.

Cave-men—who lived among the Edomites, and were of Canaanitish descent.¹ As the Edomites had Allufim, or “heads,” the Dukes of our version, the tribes of Israel had chiefs, known as princes, even before the time of Moses, for there is no mention of their having been introduced by the great law-giver. Under these “princes” or “elders,” were subordinate chiefs of greater and lesser divisions; each tribe being apparently divided into twelve “Families,” or clans, and each clan into twelve “Houses of the Fathers.”² All these chiefs, no doubt, ranked among the “elders” of the nation; but it is impossible to tell whether this name, the Hebrew Zakēn, an elder—like the Arab Sheik, the Roman Senator, the Saxon *Ælderman*, or the modern Signior, which mean the same, was simply a title of rank, without reference to age, or is to be literally understood. Nor is there any hint of the mode by which the heads or elders were elected in cases of vacancy in their number.³

Thus we have to think of Israel in Egypt not as a mere mob or multitude, but as a nation, or at least an organized community, of which the unit was the family, ruled by the father, with very extensive power. Separate households, moreover, grouped together into a minor clan, made a “House of the Fathers,” and a number of these, springing from a common ancestor, formed a “family,” or what the Romans would have called a “gens,” over which, as a greater house, was also set a “father,” or “head,” or “prince.” The different tribes, however, showed very different characteristics. Reuben, Gad and Simeon, as has been noticed, clung to a pastoral

¹ Gen. xxxvi. 29, 30.

² Num. i. 2 Josh. vii. 14, 17.

³ Michaelis, *Mosaisches Recht*, vol. i. p. 263. Ewald, *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 519. Ewald, *Alterthümer*, pp. 321 ff.

life, while Benjamin was famous for its warlike skill and spirit. Military unions, known as "thousands," were common to all; meaning, it may be, 1,000 soldiers from each, or bands selected from 1,000 households.¹ From the earliest times, also, the manhood of Israel were accustomed to act together; consulting and determining, with a noble freedom, on their common interests. Every district and division of the whole people took part in these assemblies, by representation or otherwise, and nothing was binding on them which had not been voted at such a general parliament. Thus a healthy spirit of freedom, and a patriarchal government, obtained from the first; each "head" or "elder," in his lesser or greater sphere, representing its members in the gathering of the tribes, at which, in later times, over 400,000 men, fit for war, in some cases, met.² There was moreover, under Moses, and apparently, in all after ages, a senate or council of Elders, numbering seventy or seventy-two, on whom lay a special responsibility as the advisers of the nation.

But notwithstanding differences so radical between the free internal organization of the Hebrews and the slavery of the Egyptian people, the stay of over 400 years on the Nile must have left many results of which the traces are lost. Some, however, which are still known, and have already been named, deserve more detailed mention. Of these the knowledge and use of writing must rank among the chief. It is not mentioned in connection with the patriarchs; but Moses, after the Exodus, writes the commandments on two tables of stone, as he had seen done so often in Egypt; and directions to write separate

¹ Ewald thinks the number of higher and lower elders (including princes) was 1,728, *i.e.*, 12 princes; 12 head of families of each tribe, and 12 heads of "houses" (in the collective sense) of each family.

² Judges xx. 2.

laws in a book are of frequent occurrence. Egyptian words, also, were incorporated with the Hebrew. The Jewish measures are called by Egyptian names—the log, the ephah, the hin, and the bath.¹ The local name for the Nile,—*Jeor*, meaning at once a ditch, a canal, or a river, and used especially of the Nile, is transferred to the Bible text. So also the words *Achu*—the papyrus reed-beds—is the Egyptian word used in Genesis for the green edge of the Nile, from which the cattle in Pharaoh's dream ascended to the shore.² *Gomeh*,—the word used for the material of the ark in which Moses floated—is pure Egyptian for the papyrus. The month *Adar* bears the name of the Egyptian *Athyr*, and the *Nablium* or ten-stringed harp is common to both languages. *Sus*, the Hebrew word for horse, was adopted in Egypt. *Adōn*, the name for the “Ark” of the Covenant, and *Tābah*, that of the “ark” in which Moses was preserved, are also both Egyptian. Still more curious, it appears certain that the word *Ōn*,—the cry of mourning for the dead—was only the perpetuation in Hebrew of the lament for “*Ōn*” the winter retiring sun, raised yearly, to commemorate the death of Osiris, when thousands of Egyptian men and women beat their breasts as they walked in sad procession, uttering loud cries of grief.³ The hierarchy of the Levites reminds us of the constitution of the Egyptian priesthood; the divisions of the Tabernacle and of the Temple were similar to those of the Egyptian temples.⁴

How long the Hebrews enjoyed peace and independence after the death of Joseph is only conjecture. It is very probable that a great king like Thothmes III., who needed such multitudes of labourers and workmen for his vast constructions, pressed into his service, not

¹ *Graetz*, vol. i. p. 369. *Uhlemann*, p. 52. ² Gen. xli. 18.

³ *Graetz*, vol. i. p. 370.

⁴ *Uhlemann*, p. 4.

only Egyptians and prisoners of war, but Asiatic races like the Hebrews, living on the Delta.

But it was left to Rameses II., the Sesostris of the Greeks—the ninth king after Thothmes III., and the third monarch of the Nineteenth Dynasty—to earn for himself, especially, the evil distinction of the Oppressor of the Hebrews. The Exodus is believed by Maspero¹ to have taken place under Seti II., the next king but one after Rameses, but De Rougé, Chabas, Lenormant, Sayce, Lepsius, Brugsch, Ebers and others, agree in assigning it to the reign of Menephtah I., Rameses' son and successor.

The first chapters of Exodus imply that the facts they recount took place under kings who reigned in peace, for had they had defensive wars on their hands they could not have oppressed the Hebrews, lest they should join the enemy. Such internal peace, as we shall see, marked the times of Rameses II., who, though in the earlier years of his rule engaged in foreign wars, passed the longer half of it in undisturbed quiet. The Nineteenth Dynasty had been founded by Rameses I., who had been succeeded, after a brief and obscure reign, by his son Sethos or Seti I., a great king. Under him the “outer nations” on the north-east, apparently an alliance of the remnants of the Hyksos with other related peoples, had once more overrun the Delta, to find sustenance for themselves and their cattle in the possessions of Pharaoh. But they had been driven back, and Palestine, their nearest stronghold, and even the region of the Orontes, had been invaded and conquered. Wars with Libya, and with the nations south of Egypt had followed, but they had been succeeded by a long period of repose.

¹ *Histoire, etc.*, p. 259.

New temples at Thebes, Memphis, On, and elsewhere had marked Seti's reign; but the immense expenditure had pressed so heavily, that attention was once more given to the careful working of the gold mines of Nubia, to fill the empty treasury. The remembrance of the dangers of many former kings, from the shepherd races and their allies on the north-east, must, however, amidst all their glory, have caused both Seti and the young Rameses anxious thoughts, for the Hebrews and other allied races formed the bulk of the population of the Delta, and were likely to join invaders connected with them by blood. To weaken and cripple these Asiatic communities inside the great wall, must, therefore, have long been a settled aim of Egyptian policy.

Rameses¹ was undisturbed by any troubles in Egypt, or by any invasion, though his wars with the great Hittite empire of Western Asia lasted from the fourth to the twenty-first year of his reign, and ended in a treaty gladly made on both sides, after a struggle in which each was equally exhausted. An offensive and defensive alliance was formed, each promising to come to the assistance of the other, if attacked, and agreeing to give up political offenders, criminals, or runaway slaves who had sought refuge within the boundaries of either empire.² From this time peace reigned on the Nile, and Rameses was free to carry out his policy of repression towards the Hebrews and their related fellow-settlers of the north-east of Egypt—at once to utilize their labour and to break their spirit. Such a period of quiet did not recur under his successors, who were disturbed by internal

¹ For sketches of Rameses, besides *Uarda*, see *Brugsch, Trans. of Soc. of Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. p. 28. *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 229.

² *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 68.

commotions, and thus, as has been said, Rameses seems marked out specially as the Pharaoh of the Oppression.

That he is rightly thought so, seems further established by the fact that the incidents related in the beginning of Exodus demand the long continuance of a single reign. Not only must the successive persecutions of the Hebrews have required a number of years, but Moses, on his return to Egypt after his residence of forty years in Midian, found the same king still on the throne. No Pharaoh, however, of the Nineteenth Dynasty, held the sceptre thus long but Rameses II. The son of one who was not of pure royal blood, he had been regarded as the true king, through his mother, even from his birth, and had hence, from childhood,¹ been associated on the throne with his father; though he dates his reign only from Seti's death, when he himself was eighteen or twenty years of age. Yet he lived to wear the crown for sixty-seven years,² in wonderful accordance with the statement that "after a long time the king of Egypt died."³ His reign therefore answers precisely the conditions required by the Bible narrative.

The monuments of this great king still cover the soil of Egypt and Nubia in almost countless numbers, and show him to have been the greatest builder of all the Pharaohs.⁴ There is not, says Mariette, a ruin in Egypt or Nubia that does not bear his name. Two grand

¹ Lenormant, *Histoire Ancienne*, vol. i. p. 404.

² *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 110.

³ Exod. ii. 23: Lauth's Translation. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1877, p. 429. So, De Wette and Augusti. Hitzig, *Geschichte*, p. 59, makes Joseph come to Egypt under Rameses II., and so does Bertheau (p. 233). Munk, more justly assigns the date as during the reign of the Hyksos. *Palästina*, p. 264. So, writer in *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. p. 73.

⁴ *Maspero*, pp. 225-6.

temples at Ipsamboul, hewn out of the hills, with four colossal human figures, sixty-five feet high, at the entrances, were intended to perpetuate the memory of his victories over the negroes and the Syrians. At Thebes, the great temple of Amenhotep III. was finished, and adorned with two huge obelisks in granite, one of which is now in Paris. The second huge porch or pylon of the great temple of Amon at Karnak was covered with tableaux, representing the wars with the Hittites or Kheta of Western Asia. The temple of Gournou, begun by Seti, was finished and consecrated. The Ramesseum of Thebes, another great temple, is covered with sculptures also commemorating the Hittite wars. The temple of Abydos, built in honour of Seti, shows that king sitting on the throne in the midst of the gods; a club in one hand, in the other a sceptre. Gods sit on each side, and in rows behind him, while Rameses offers homage, in front, to his father, as to one of their number.¹ Everywhere: at Memphis, at Bubastis, at the quarries of Silsilis, and at the mines of Sinai, similar memorials occur. The porch of the temple of Ptah, at Memphis, had a porch built by him at its entrance, at the sides of which were placed statues nearly fifty feet high,² of himself and his queen. In the land of Goshen he restored and beautified the vast temple of Zoan-Tanis, neglected by the sovereigns of the Eighteenth Dynasty; the city itself being, besides, well-nigh rebuilt. He founded towns, dug canals, and filled the land with colossi, sphinxes, statues, and other creations. Of the thirty-two obelisks which yet exist in Egypt or elsewhere, twenty-one were either in whole or in part due to him; and of the eight temples which still remain in the

¹ *Maspero*, p. 217.

² *Herod.*, ii. 110. *Diod.*, i. 57. They were thirty cubits high.

ruins of Thebes, there is only one which he did not complete or build entirely.¹ He also erected a chain of fortifications along the entire north-east frontier of Egypt, for 160 miles, to defend it from the invasions of the Syrians and Arabs. Cities which were endangered by the yearly inundations he protected by huge earthen dykes, and he intersected the entire region between Memphis and the sea with channels of irrigation so wide and so numerous, that it became henceforth impracticable for cavalry or war chariots, for which it had before been especially adapted. Herodotus further tells us, that he marked off, in square blocks, the land thus reclaimed, and distributed them among his Egyptian favourites, treating the Delta as a new province, now, for the first time, incorporated with the rest of the kingdom.²

But with what an expenditure of human misery must all this have been attended! It fills the mind with horror to think of the thousands of prisoners of war, or forced labourers and workmen, who must have died under the blows of the drivers, or under the weight of privations and toil too great for human endurance, in raising these innumerable creations. When slaves could not be had in sufficient numbers, after the close of the Syrian wars, great slave-hunting razzias to Ethiopia were organized, to harry the far south and drag off thousands of negroes and others, in chains, to toil in the brickfield, the quarry, or the temple precincts. All the foreign tribes of Semitic origin who had settled in the Delta were oppressed by forced labour. Even the native population had to suffer. A letter of the period is still extant, which tells how "the tax-collector arrives (in his barge) at the wharf of the district, to receive the

¹ *Notes on Obelisks*, by J. Bonomi. *Trans. Royal Soc. Lit.*, vol. i. p. 158.

² Osburn's *Israel in Egypt*, p. 201.

government share of the crops. His men armed with clubs, are with him, and his negroes, with batons of palm-wood, cry out, 'Where's your wheat?' and there is no way of checking their exactions. If they are not satisfied, they seize the poor wretch, throw him on the ground, bind him, drag him off to the canal at hand and throw him in, head first; the neighbours running off, to take care of their own grain, and leaving the poor creature to his fate. His wife is bound, and she and his children carried off."¹ The numbers of prisoners taken in wars were, indeed, far too small to meet the demand for labour on such vast and countless works as Rameses undertook, for in the records of each campaign the returns, carefully given, are singularly insignificant; men preferring death to the horrors of slavery.² He could only procure the toil required for works more numerous than those of all the other kings of Egypt for 2000 years, by driving off to them, as forced labourers, all the population he could venture to enslave, the Hebrews among them.³

The tasks to which they were set included all that the plans of Rameses demanded. They were doubtless marched in gangs to the quarries to hew out huge blocks of granite and limestone, and then set to drag them to their respective destinations, or to ship them on rafts and

¹ Maspero, *Du Genre Épistolaire chez les Anciens Égyptiens*. Le-normant, *Manuel de l'Hist. Ancienne de l'Orient*, vol. i. p. 423. The priests told Diodorus that no native Egyptian had had to work on these vast constructions, but they knew well that this was not the truth.

² Even four, ten, or fifteen prisoners are carefully noted. The highest number taken in any one series of campaigns is given on the monuments as 2,400.

³ Homer, in the *Odyssey*, xiv. 272, xvii. 441, makes Ulysses speak of the Egyptians as killing some of his crew and driving off the rest to slave labour.

pilot them down the Nile. They would be employed in digging canals; in making bricks and mixing mortar for the countless erections always in progress; in painfully raising the Nile waters into the canals for irrigation and their circulation over the land, as we still see it along the banks of the river, where the peasants, naked under the burning sun, work through the day, like pieces of machinery, drawing up the buckets of water from the stream, to the fields above. "All manner of service in the field," in short, would be exacted from them, "besides all their (other) labour, which they put upon them with rigour."¹

"It is very hard to make the smooth road on which the colossus is to slide along," says an inscription of the period; "but how unspeakably harder to drag the huge mass like beasts of burden." There was no machinery then; little mechanical help; the strain lay almost wholly on human thews and sinews. "The arms of the workman," continues the inscription "are utterly worn out. His food is a mixture of all things vile: he can wash himself only once in a season. But that which above all is wretched is when he has to drag for a month together, over the soft yielding soil of the gardens of a mansion, a huge block of ten cubits by six."² Egypt in all ages has been so marked by the oppression of its toiling thousands, that one of the crimes from which an Egyptian had to clear himself before the judge of the soul, was cruelty to them. Thirty thousand men died in

¹ Exod. i. 14.

² About 17 feet by 10. *Papyrus Sallier*, ii. 6, 1. Chabas, *Recherches sur la XIX^e Dynastie*, p. 144. 120,000 men died in digging out a canal to unite the Nile and the Red Sea, in the reign of Pharaoh Necho, and, after all, the scheme was abandoned on account of an adverse oracle,

this very century in digging out the Mahmoudieh Canal with their hands, without picks, or spades, or wheelbarrows—falling worn out with toil exacted from them by the blows of their pitiless taskmasters; and the monuments show similar misery to have been inflicted from the remotest ages. Doubtless the Hebrews suffered in the same way, and their groans and murmurs may well have taken the shape of those of the wretched fellahs of our own day, whose songs have such refrains as, “The chief of the village, may the dogs tear him, tear him, tear him:” “They starve us, they starve us:” “They beat us, they beat us:”—“But there’s some one above who will punish them well, who will punish them well.”¹

The Bible statement, that the Hebrews “built for Pharaoh the store cities Pithom and Raamses,”² is strangely corroborated in the case of the latter by contemporary documents, which mention the Israelites under the name of Aperiu or Aberiu, the Egyptian pronunciation of their own way of naming themselves, as the “Ibërim,”³ or, as we say, Hebrews. In the first, a scribe called Kaonisar writes to his superior, the scribe Bekenptah, thus: “For your satisfaction I have obeyed the command you gave me, saying, Deliver their food to the soldiers, and also to the Aperiu who transport the stone for the great Bekhennu—depots and fortified magazines—of the king Rameses, the lover of Amon, which are under the charge of Ameneman, the chief of the Mazai,

¹ Nassau Senior’s *Journal in Egypt*, 1856. Stephens’ *Incidents*, vol. i. p. 22.

² By “store cities” is meant depots for all kinds of provision, war material, etc., perhaps like Woolwich. Great magazines for the public service, in short. *Durch Gosen*, p. 521.

³ The Egyptian plural ended in *u* instead of the *m* of the Hebrew.

or gendarmerie. I give them rations each month according to your excellent instructions.”¹ The second document is from another scribe to his superior, Hiu, a high official of Rameses II. “I have obeyed,” says he, “your command to give provision to the Egyptian soldiers, and also to the Hebrews who transport the stones” —great blocks dragged from the other side of the river —“for the Sun-temple of Rameses-Miamun, on the southern part of Memphis.” Mazai, or gendarmerie, a corps of foreign mercenaries drawn from Libya, and thus in no danger of sympathy with the oppressed, filled the hateful office of the under taskmasters who punished the wretched gangs.²

An interesting contemporary account of Rameses Tanis, the Rameses especially mentioned in Exodus, has already been given, but a second, also, has fortunately been preserved. “His majesty, Rameses II.,” writes a scribe to his friend, “has built for himself a town, Rameses. It lies between Palestine and Egypt, and abounds in delicious food. It is a second Hermouthis, (a suburb of Thebes), and will endure as long as Memphis. The sun rises and sets in it. Every one leaves his town to settle in its district. The fishermen of the sea bring it eels and fish, and the tribute of their lake. The citizens wear festal robes each day, with perfumed oil on their heads, and new wigs: they stand at their doors, bouquets in hand—green branches from the town of Pa

¹ *Pap. Hier. of Leyden*, i. 348. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 502. Chabas, *Mélanges*, 1st series, p. 44; 3rd series, vol. ii. p. 222. This papyrus was found in the tombs at Memphis. Wheat, meat, fish, fresh or salted, and vegetables, were provided by government for the labourers, but the quantity was at times so insufficient that the works had to be suspended from the weakness of the starved men. Chabas, *Deux Pap. Hier.*, p. 24.

² *Durch Gosen*, p. 75.

Hathor—garlands from the town of Pahour, on the day of Pharaoh's coming. Joy reigns and spreads without bounds. Rameses Miamum, life, health, strength to him; he is the god Mout¹ of the two Egypts in his speech: the sun of kings as ruler: the glory of Egypt, the friend of Tum, as general. All the earth comes to him. The great king of the Kheta—the Hittites²—sends his messenger to his fellow-prince of Kadesh (on the Orontes), saying, 'If thou be ready, let us set out for Egypt, for the words of the god Rameses II., are fulfilling themselves. Let us pay our court to him at Tanis for he gives breath to him whom he loves, and by him all the people live.'"³

Tanis, or "Rameses," named after the king, as Alexandria was after Alexander, or Constantinople after Constantine, ranked next to Thebes in the preference of its second founder. He could easily march from it against the Asiatic peoples, and it was near the frontier, to welcome him back from his wars. Hence it became his special residence. Connected with the sea by the Tanitic branch of the Nile, then broad and navigable, it also commanded the entrance of the great fortified road to Palestine, and thus was, in the fullest sense, the key of Egypt. It was doubtless for this reason that Rameses transferred his court thither, strengthened its fortifications, and virtually rebuilt it; making it in fact a temple city of the great gods of Egypt, and of Baal

¹ One of the three gods of Thebes.

² By the way it is curious to find that Rameses used blood-hounds to hunt down his foes, in the Hittite war. *Trans. Bib. Arch.* vol. ii. p. 180.

³ Maspero, *Du Genre Épistolaire, etc.*, p. 102. Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 2nd series, p. 151. For the divinity of the Pharaoh, see also Maspero, *Histoire Anc.*, p. 9. *Records of the Past*, vol. i. pp. 6, 8.

Sutekh, the god of the Hyksos.¹ In its glory, as Moses saw it, with its countless statues, obelisks, sphinxes, and other monuments, and its great temples and majestic royal palace, it must have been imposing in its magnificence; especially in the eyes of the Hebrew population, in whose midst it had risen like a city of enchantment, though at a fearful cost of suffering to themselves.

The city of Pi-thom, "the House or Town of the god Tum," has not received the same notice as Tanis, in any Egyptian document, hitherto discovered; but its name frequently occurs. It lay near Bubastis, on the road from On to Pelusium, in the far north-east. Mounds of ruins still mark its site, and near them are still some pools mentioned in an ancient papyrus, in connection with a request made to Menephtah, the king of the Exodus, from some Bedouins of Idumea, to be allowed to pasture their herds in the neighbourhood.²

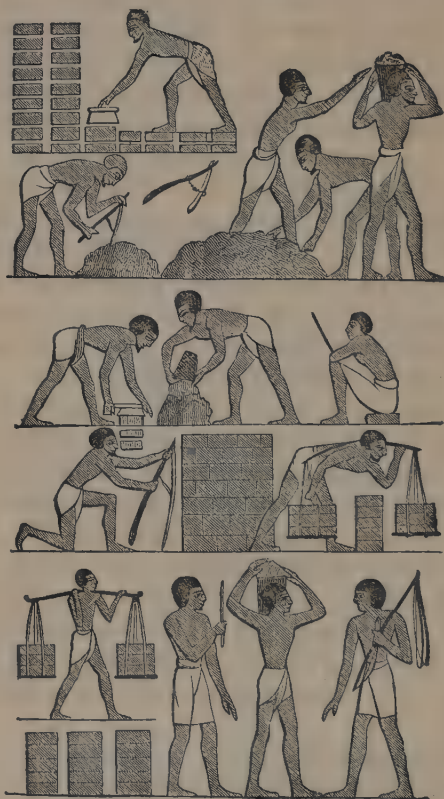
An old writing on the back of a papyrus, apparently of the date of Seti, the founder of the Nineteenth Dynasty, brings vividly before us a picture of the brickmaking, which was part of the labours of the Hebrews. "Twelve masons," says the writer, "besides men who are brick moulders in their towns, have been brought here to work at house building. *Let them make their number of bricks each day.* They are not to relax their tasks at the new house. It is thus I obey the command given me by my master."³ These twelve masons and these brickmakers,

¹ *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 95.

² Chabas, *Mélanges Égypt.*, 2nd series p. 155. The word used for the pools is Barkabuta, which implies the residence of Semitic herdsmen around, for it is evidently connected with the Hebrew word for a pool, Beraichah, *pl.* Beraichoth.

³ *Papyrus Anastasi*, back of pl. 3. Chabas, *Mélanges Égypt.*, 2nd series p. 133.

thus taken from their own towns to build this house, at a fixed rate of task work daily, may not have been Hebrews, but their case illustrates exactly the details of Hebrew slavery given in Exodus. It is, moreover, a



SLAVES IN THE EGYPTIAN BRICKFIELDS.—From Tomb of Abd-el-Qurnak.

striking fact, in connection with the narrative of Moses, that great part of the constructions of Rameses II. were of brick, as seen to this day in the mounds which hide

their ruins.¹ Huge bricks of Nile mud dried in the sun, some mixed with stubble and others made without straw²—the remains of the town wall—still mark the site of Rameses.³ Nor is it, in the opinion of so calm a mind as that of Ebers, too much to believe that they were moulded by Jewish hands.⁴ Indeed, even the details of brick-making like theirs are supplied by the monuments. In a tomb on the hill Abd-el-Qurnah, a picture of the time of Thothmes III. has been preserved, in which prisoners of war, set to build the temple of Amon, are seen toiling at the bitter labours of the brickfield. Some carry water in jugs from the tank hard by; others knead and cut up the loamy earth; others, again, make bricks in earthen moulds, or place them carefully in long rows, to dry; and some are building walls. An accompanying inscription states that these are captives whom Thothmes III. had carried away, to build the house of his father, the god Amon. The “baking of the bricks” is for a new provision house of the god. Nor is there wanting a taskmaster; for the overseer watches the workers; the words “don’t idle, the stick is in my hand,” being painted as on his lips.⁵

The monuments often, indeed, speak of brickmaking by forced labour, and in the various paintings which represent this, or any other kind of “task work,” the overseer with his stick is rarely absent. Thus, among the pictures at Bēni Hassan, workmen are represented

¹ Brugsch, *Histoire*, p. 174. The name of Rameses is stamped on each brick, thus: “Ra, Lord of Truth, the Chosen of the Sun-god.”

² *Durch Gosen*, p. 76. See Exod. v. 6–18.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 501; Birch, *Egypt from the Monuments*, p. 127.

⁴ *Durch Gosen*, p. 75.

⁵ Bunsen's *Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 114. Brugsch, *La Sortie des Hébreux d'Égypte*, pp. 14, 15. Brugsch, *Histoire*, vol. i. p. 376.

being beaten severely with short sticks, which differed from the long rods of office, and were used solely to bastinado the unfortunate labourers. Some of these are seen thrown naked on the ground, two men holding the arms and another the feet, while the taskmaster showers blows on the exposed body. There is even a picture at Beni Hassan of a woman being thus bastinadoed.¹

¹ The task-masters in Exodus, lit. Chiefs of the Tribute, were dignified officials, apparently over large divisions of the *corvée*. Inferior officers were placed over sections of these, and the *zekānim*, or elders, and the *shoterim*, or scribes, of the Hebrews themselves, seem to have been responsible for the work to be done by the men of their respective localities.





CHAPTER IV.

MOSES.

HOW long the policy of oppression had been in force against the Hebrews before the Exodus, can only be conjectured. As far back as the days of the great Thothmes III. we have seen Asiatic prisoners of war toiling in the brickfields,¹ as the Israelites had to do under Rameses. The hostility towards all the Semitic races, as the special enemies of Egypt for ages, and as, for centuries, its masters, in the dark days of the Hyksos, would, indeed, naturally direct itself against the Hebrews, their brethren in race. Whether the distrust and hatred had been deepened by the part taken by the Asiatic population of the Delta during the long war of liberation, cannot now be ascertained; but even if they had been neutral, any favour shown them would have seemed an encouragement to the common enemy, within Egypt itself. It would almost appear, moreover, as if a clause in the treaty of Rameses II. with the Kheta or Hittites, alluding to fugitive subjects who were to be sent back from Palestine, hints at a restlessness in the Semitic races still in Lower Egypt, which needed to be vigorously repressed.² Nor is it clear that the Hebrews, a people full of young life and energy, and rapidly increasing in

¹ Page 84.

² Brugsch, *Histoire*, vol. ii. p. 74.

numbers, had not been for generations plotting their escape from the banks of the Nile; for the flight of bands sufficient to lead to a provision for their extradition, in the Hittite treaty, must have represented a state of feeling far from settled. That they were fierce and warlike, even while in Egypt, and that they often made forays into Canaan, is hinted at in various passages of the Old Testament. Thus, as has before been noticed, the sons of Ephraim are said to have made an inroad, during their father's life, as far at least as Gath, to drive off the cattle of the Philistines.¹ Sherah, a daughter of Ephraim, moreover, is said to have built the upper and lower villages of Bethhoron—the "Hollow way,"—the one at the head, the other at the bottom, of the wild steep pass of the border hills of Ephraim and Benjamin;² and, also, Uzen Sherah—Sherah's inheritance—another village presumably in the same district.³ The grandchildren of Judah, moreover, were not only famous in after ages for the fine linen which they had learned to weave, doubtless in Egypt, but also for having held "the dominion in Moab."⁴ No wonder that the Pharaohs should have been alarmed lest such a race should

¹ 1 Chron. vii. 21.

² Furrer's *Palästina*, p. 14. *Bethhoron*, in *Riehm*.

³ 1 Chron. vii. 24.

⁴ 1 Chron. iv. 22. The word Jashubi-lehem is understood by Bertheau *Kurzgefass. Handbuch*, as the name of one of the sons of Sherah. It means "returning to the bread," perhaps an abbreviation of Beth-lehem, "returning to Bethlehem," as Ruth did. By some scholars the words "held the dominion," are translated "became citizens of." So Sept., Vulgate, Schlottmann. But Gesenius, Bertheau, Keil, and Hitzig retain the meaning in our version. Hitzig translates the name Jashubi-lehem by "and requited them." Ewald makes it "brought them home wives:" fanciful enough, both!

multiply still more, and, joining their enemies, fight against Egypt in case of war, and "get them up out of the land,"¹ where slaves so hardy and enduring were essential for the public works.

But while the mighty kings of the Nile Valley were bent on weakening the Hebrews by every form of tyranny and oppression, they were themselves, in the Providence of God, to be made the agents in preparing one of the hated race to become in due time its deliverer. Jewish tradition touchingly describes the condition of these ancestors of the nation. Joseph, it tells us, had been almost universally loved by the Egyptians, but after his death, though the Hebrews turned so much towards Egyptian ways, as even in many cases to neglect the circumcision of their children, popular dislike increased against them. Taxes and forced labour were exacted, instead of their being left free, as hitherto. Fields, vineyards, and other possessions, given them by Joseph, were taken from them, and they were formally enslaved. They had, moreover, to build fortresses, store cities, and pyramids; to lead off the Nile waters into canals, surround towns with dams, to keep off the yearly inundations; to learn all kinds of trades that they might work at them for their masters, and even the women had to toil in many ways.² But help was now slowly preparing.

Among the Hebrew tribes in Egypt that of Levi

¹ Exod. i. 10.

² Beer's *Leben Moses*, p. 9. The Rabbis, in their desire to glorify the Hebrew matrons, gravely say that six, twelve, or even sixty children were born at a birth, all strong and well formed! *Ibid.*, p. 12. The allusion to the neglect of circumcision as copied from the Egyptians, is, of course, an error on the part of the tradition, as also is the reference to the building of pyramids.

appears from the first to have specially given itself to the higher culture which prevailed around, and to have held the foremost place, as in some degree a priestly caste. Other tribes doubtless gave themselves, more or less, to the arts and sciences which flourished in the valley of the Nile—the painting, the sculpture, the weaving, the dyeing, the working in precious stones and in metals; but to Levi the whole were indebted for the adoption of writing from the Egyptians,² and the higher “wisdom” was apparently left to their study. Among their number was Amram—the “Kindred of the Lofty One,”—and Jochebed,—she “whose glory is Jehovah,”—his aunt,³ both of the tribe of Levi⁴—and of the family of Kohath, the second of Levi’s sons. From the marriage of these two sprang the great leaders, Miriam, Aaron, and Moses, the first about twelve years older than her second illustrious brother, who was also younger than Aaron by about three years.⁵ Their mother’s name, alone, proves that her family had remained true to the hereditary faith of their race, and still clung to the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; keeping far from Egyptian idolatry and corruption. Her children must have grown up in an atmosphere of saintly morals and godliness, to have developed the character they afterwards showed. But to the inspired writers the most exalted human being was only dust and ashes in the sight of the Almighty, and details are studiously

¹ 1 Sam. ii. 27, 28. These verses are to be read, not interrogatively, but as statements of facts. *Graetz*, p. 14.

² *Graetz*, vol. i. p. 14.

³ Exod. vi. 20.

⁴ *Sept.* and *Heb.* Exod. ii. 1. “Son” in our version = to descendant.” 1 Chron. vi. 2.

⁵ *Moses*, in *Riehm*.

shunned which could by any possibility lead to a hero worship incompatible with the absolute and undivided honour due only to God. Hence we know very little of the personal history of the illustrious household.

Moses appears to have been born about eighty years before the Exodus, for that was his age when he returned to Egypt from Midian. Thus, his youth runs side by side with that of Rameses II., the future oppressor of the Hebrews, but the national hero of the Egyptians, and the great Sesostris of the outside world; whom poetry and legend delighted to surround with no less than divine glory. Exodus tells us, that at the time of the birth of Moses, an edict to put to death all newborn Hebrew male children was in its early vigorous force, so that it was only by concealment Jochebed could save her infant during the first three months of his life. At that time his birth became known to Pharaoh's police, and nothing remained but to let him be put to death, or to trust him to the care of Providence in a way of which she may very likely have heard, in a legend brought by her ancestors, from their ancient home in Chaldea. There, in Abraham's day, a great king, Sargon I., had reigned, the creator of the new Chaldean idolatry, from which the Father of the Faithful had turned away, to seek a purer home in Canaan. Strangely enough, this prince had caused a most romantic story of his own birth to be recorded on the clay tablets of the royal library. It ran thus:—

“I am Sargon, the great king, the king of Agana. My mother was of the masters of the land, but I never knew my father. I was born secretly in the city of Atzipirani, on the banks of the Euphrates. My mother put me in an ark of bulrushes lined with bitumen, and laid me in the river, which did not enter the ark. It bore

me to the dwelling of Akki, the water-carrier,¹ and he, in the goodness of his heart, lifted me from the water, and brought me up as his own son. After this he established me as a gardener, and Ishtar caused me to prosper, and, after years, I came to be king.”² Acting either on the hint of this strange legend, or led in a like



THE PAPYRUS.

case to a similar course, Jochebed prepared a little ark of papyrus, and after coating it with bitumen, to prevent the water from reaching the child, put him in it; doubtless with many a prayer. She then laid it among the papyrus reeds on the edge of one of the broad canals at Tanis, or Rameses, where she lived, and set the infant's sister, a girl of about twelve, to watch his fate from a distance. An inscription found by Ebers, if he translate it

aright, seems to point to Tanis, “the field of Zoan,”

¹ A labourer of the lowest and meanest class. See Josh. ix. 21, 23, 27.

² Smith's *Chaldean Genesis*, p. 299. Fox Talbot, in *Trans. of Soc. of Bib. Arch.*, vol. i. p. 271, and in *Records of the Past*, vol. v. p. 1. Lenormant, *Les Premières Civilizations*, vol. ii. p. 104. Mr. Talbot translates the last two lines thus: “He placed me with a tribe of Foresters and they made me king.” He supposes that he became captain of this band of rude people and from this rose to power. Ishtar was the Assyrian Venus.

and the scene of his future "wonders," as the birth-place of the destined law-giver. In this case his exposure took place, not on the broad stream of the Nile at Memphis, as one tradition has asserted, but far to the north, among the Hebrew population of the Delta; on one of the flowing canals of irrigation which spread in a network over the land. Rameses, it would appear from the curious document in question, was living at Tanis exactly eighty years before the date¹ which has been fixed by Lepsius² as that of the Exodus—B.C. 1314.³ From the vast numbers of the Hebrews who left Egypt, when Moses was 80 years of age, it is not likely that the command to destroy the male infants remained long in force, but it could only have been given under the influence of immediate contact with the evil against which it was directed; that is, while Rameses was in residence at his northern Delta capital—Tanis.

According to the custom of the court, his family doubtless attended him, and thus the presence of the princess by whom Moses was rescued is explained. In those days the papyrus, now found only in the far southern White Nile, must have grown thickly in the broad canals of Lower Egypt. In its pleasant screen the little ark would be protected from the sun; while the privacy secured would attract the ladies of the court to a spot so suited for the frequent bathing demanded alike from the heat of the climate, and as a religious requirement. The slow current, and limited surface, moreover, would prevent any danger of the ark being swept out of sight, as it might well have been on the broad bosom of the Nile.⁴

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 82.

² *Chronologie der Ägypter*, vol. i. p. 314.

³ *Exod. vii. 7.* Diestel thinks the date of the Exodus, B.C. 1491

⁴ See *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 255.

If the dates on which Ebers relies be correct, Seti I. must have been still reigning when Moses was born, and with him his young child Rameses, as associated king; for, as already said, he was thus honoured from his infancy, on account of his pure royal descent through his mother. The daughter of Pharaoh by whom the baby was saved¹ must, therefore, have been a sister of Rameses. Seti, however, in accordance with Egyptian custom, had made over to Rameses in his early youth, as his wives, a number of ladies from the royal harem, and among these, it is more than likely, the rescuer of Moses; for, as we have already seen, a marriage of brother and sister was thought in Egypt, as in Ancient Persia, the best possible for a prince; to guarantee the purity of the divine blood of the royal House. The practice, indeed, prevailed on the Nile as late as the times of the Ptolemies.²

Though not given in the Bible, the name of the "daughter of Pharaoh" has been handed down by tradition as Thermouthis,³ and also as Merris,⁴ both which occur in the inscriptions. Thus, Thermouthis is the name of an Egyptian town, in a fragment of Stephen of Byzance,⁵ and, in a list of princesses, the monuments name one as Meri, which is evidently identical with Merris;⁶ while they give Thermouthis, the very name in

¹ The gorgeous dress of a daughter of Pharaoh is described in Ebers' *Uarda*, vol. i. pp. 63, 64, 297, and in his *Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. ii. p. 247.

² *Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. iii. pp. 122, 291. That, in spite of prohibition by the law (Lev. xviii. 9, 11), marriages of brothers and sisters were not unknown in Israel, is seen from 2 Sam. xiii. 13.

³ Jos., *Ant.*, II. ix. 5.

⁴ Euseb., *Præp. Evang.*, ix. 27.

⁵ A Greek geographer of the sixth century, who wrote a great geographical dictionary, fragments of which only are extant.

⁶ *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 112.

Josephus, as that of one of the wives of Rameses.¹ He had also a favourite daughter Bent Anat—the heroine of Ebers' charming story "Uarda"—and married her, as he had done his sister Thermouthis. So low was the morality of the Nile Valley, even round the throne of the greatest of all its kings.

A curious fact, which however is of questionable value, is mentioned by Brugsch. An inscription dating from about a hundred years after the death of Rameses II.; the great Sesostriis, speaks of a place in Middle Egypt which seems to refer to the Hebrew Lawgiver. It is called T-en Moshé—"the island," or "the river bank of Moses." It lay on the eastern side of the river, near the city of the heretic king Khunaten.² But, unfortunately, the locality does not suit that of the exposure of the infant destined to be so illustrious.

The meaning of the name Moses is given in Exodus as "drawn out" (from the water); and this is supported by the fact that the words *mo* and *shi*, respectively, mean still, in Coptic, "water," and "to take." That it is a Hebraized form of an Egyptian name appears certain, but the original form is believed by modern scholars to have been Mesu, which often appears in Egyptian writings, and was written "Mosis" by the Greeks.³ Josephus⁴ derives it from the Egyptian words, *Mo*, water, and *Uses*, "the saved one;" and this was evidently the opinion also, before his day, of the Alexandrian

¹ Lenormant *Histoire Ancienne*, vol. i. p. 423. Maspero, *L'Inscription Dédicatoire du Temple d'Abydos*, p. 29. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 525. Thermouthis means "Beloved by the goddess Mut."

² Brugsch, vol. 2. p. 112.

³ Lepsius, *Chronologie*, vol. i. p. 326. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 526.

⁴ *Ant.*, II. ix. 6.

translators of the Bible, who give the name as Mōüses. It seems reasonable, therefore, to keep to the old etymology of the Bible, since it was thus supported even in Egypt, long before Christ.¹

Handed over to the care of his mother during his tender years—thanks to the quick wit of his sister Miriam—Moses became a permanent inmate of the palace in his early boyhood. Once there, he was adopted by Thermouthis, and received the care and training of a king's son; Rameses the Oppressor becoming unconsciously his Protector! Ebers has given us an idea of the splendour amidst which the wondering child must thus have grown up. The Palace of Rameses, he tells us,² was more like a little town than a house. The part of it used by the royal family commanded a view of the Nile, from which it offered to the passing vessels a pleasing prospect, for it stood, amidst its surrounding gardens, in picturesque buildings of various outline, not as a huge and solitary mass. On each side of a large structure which contained the state rooms and banqueting hall, three rows of pavilions of different sizes extended in symmetrical order. These were connected with each other by colonnades, or by little bridges, under which flowed canals that watered the gardens, and gave the palace the aspect of a town upon islands.

The principal part of the palace was built of light Nile-

¹ Delitzsch and Keil adopt the derivation, Mo=water: udsche (soft *g*)=to be saved from; and this seems on the whole the best. Both words are Coptic. Keil u. Delitzsch, *Komment.* Moudsche, they suppose, was softened into Mosche, the Hebrew form. Vol. i. p. 364.

² *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 288. The palace described was at Thebes, but it none the less helps us to realize the splendours that surrounded the childhood, youth, and manhood of Moses, till he was forty.

mud bricks and elegantly carved woodwork, but the extensive walls which surrounded it were ornamented and fortified with towers, in front of which heavily armed soldiers stood on guard.

The walls and pillars, the galleries and colonnades, and even the roofs, blazed with many colours, and at every gate rose tall masts, from which red and blue flags streamed when the king was in residence. Tall brass spikes at their top were intended at once to add to the splendour and to act as lightning conductors. On the right of the principal building, and entirely surrounded with thick plantations of trees, stood the houses of the royal ladies; some mirrored in the lake, round which they stood at a greater or less distance. In this part of the grounds were the king's store houses, in long rows; while behind the central building in which the Pharaoh resided, stood the treasuries, and the barracks of the body-guard. The left wing was occupied by the officers of the household, and the innumerable servants, and by the royal horses and chariots.

Two rooms of this palace, in the ladies' quarter, are also described by Ebers, from the monuments, and help us to realize the associations that must have been familiar to the early life of Moses. Passing through the gardens in which a hundred gardeners watered the turf, the flower-beds, the shrubs and the trees, and crossing the quadrangles in which companies of guards came and went, and where horses were being trained and broken, the princess and her maidens, on returning from the river, would be received, as her litter entered the gates, by a lord in waiting, and then led by the chamberlain to her rooms, amidst low bows. One of her chambers commanded the river, to enjoy the beauty of which a doorway, closed with light curtains, opened on a long balcony with

a finely worked balustrade, to which clung a climbing rose with pink flowers. The carpets in the room itself were of sky-blue and silver brocade from Damascus; the coverings of the seats and couches had been richly embroidered with feathers by Ethiopian women, and looked like the breasts of birds. The images of the goddess Hathor, which stood on the house altar, were of an imitation of emerald called Mafkat, and other little

figures were of lapis-lazuli, malachite, agate, and bronze overlaid with gold. On the toilet table stood a collection of unguent boxes, and cups of ebony and ivory finely carved—everything being arranged with the utmost taste.



EGYPTIAN CHAIR.

The other room was also worthy of such a kingly house. It was high and airy, and its furniture consisted of costly but simple necessities. The lower part of the wall was lined with cool tiles of white and violet earthenware, on each of

which was pictured a star. Above these, the walls were covered with a dark green material brought from Sais, which also covered the long divans skirting them. Chairs and stools, made of cane, stood round a very long table in the middle of the room, out of which several others opened; all handsome, comfortable and harmonious in aspect. Rare and magnificent plants, artistically arranged on stands, stood in the corners of many of the

rooms. In others were tall obelisks of ebony, bearing saucers for incense, which all the Egyptians loved, at once for its perfume and as a disinfectant.¹

The garden stretching below the windows was as wonderful as all else. A famous artist had laid it out in the time of Queen Hatasu, and the picture which he had in his mind when he sowed the seeds and planted the young shoots, was now realized, many decades after his death. He intended it to form a carpet on which the palace should seem to stand. Tiny streams, in bends and curves, formed the outline of the design, and the shapes they enclosed were filled with plants of every size, form, and colour. Beautiful plats of fresh green turf everywhere represented the groundwork of the pattern, and flower beds and clumps of shrubs stood out from them in harmonious mixture of colours; while tall and rare trees, which Hatasu's ships had brought from Arabia, gave dignity and impressiveness to the whole.²



EGYPTIAN CHAIR.

A few more extracts from the same wonderful restoration of Egyptian life at the time of Moses, bring before us other aspects of the scene amidst which his early life was passed. A grand temporary banqueting hall erected at Avaris or Pelusium, on the frontier wall

¹ *Uarda*, vol. i. pp. 285, 288.

² *Ibid.*, p. 292.

towards Palestine, when Rameses came back from his wars with the Kheta of Syria, is thus described, in strict accordance with details gathered from the monuments. "It was of unusual height, and had a vaulted ceiling painted blue and sprinkled with stars, to represent the night heavens. This rested on pillars; carved, some in the form of date palms; some, like cedars of Lebanon. The leaves and twigs consisted of artfully fastened and coloured tissue: elegant festoons of bluish gauze were stretched from pillar to pillar across the hall, and were attached in the centre of the eastern wall to a large shell-shaped canopy over the throne of the king, decorated with pieces of green and blue glass, mother of pearl, shining plates of mica, and other sparkling objects.

"The throne itself had the shape of a buckler, guarded by two lions, which rested on each side of it, and formed the arms; and it was supported on the backs of four Asiatic captives who crouched beneath the weight. Thick carpets, which seemed to have transported the seashore to the dry land—for their pale blue was strewn with a variety of shells, fishes, and water-plants—covered the floor of the banqueting hall, in which three hundred seats were placed beside the tables, for the nobles of the kingdom and the officers of the troops. Above all this splendour hung a thousand lamps shaped like tulips and lilies, and in the entrance stood a huge basket of roses, to be strewn before the king when he should arrive.

"Even the bedrooms for the king and his suite were splendidly decorated. Finely embroidered purple stuffs covered the walls, a light cloud of pale blue gauze hung across the ceiling, and giraffe skins were laid, instead of carpets, on the floors. A separate pavilion, gilt and

wreathed with flowers, was erected to receive the horses which the king had used in the battle, and which he had dedicated to the Sun-god.

“Crowds of men and women from all parts,” of whom Moses may have been one, “had thronged to Pelusium, to welcome the conqueror and his victorious army on their return, and every great temple college had sent a deputation to meet him. A few only of these wore the modest white robe of the simple priest: most were adorned with the panther skin worn by the prophets. Each bore a staff decorated with roses, lilies, and green branches, and many carried censers in the form of a golden arm, with incense in the hollow of the hand, to be burnt before the king. Among the deputies from the priesthood of Thebes were several women of high rank, who served in the worship of Amon. . .

“Ere long, the flags were hoisted on the standards beside the triumphal arches, clouds of dust rolled up the farther shore of the Nile, and the blare of trumpets was heard. First came the horses which had carried Rameses through the fight, with the king himself, who drove them. His eyes sparkled with joyful triumph, as the vast multitude on the other side of the bridge hailed him with wild enthusiasm and tears of emotion, strewing in his path the spoils of their gardens—flowers, garlands, and palm branches.” . . . The scene at the banquet, at which Moses may have been a guest, was in keeping with all this pomp. “Hundreds of slaves hurried to and fro loaded with costly dishes. Large vessels of richly wrought gold and silver were brought into the hall on wheels, and set on the side-boards. Children, perched in the shells and lotus-flowers that hung from the painted rafters and from between the pillars hung with cloudy transparent tissues, threw roses

and violets down on the company.¹ The sound of harps and songs issued from concealed rooms, and from an altar ten feet high, in the middle of the room clouds of incense were wafted into space."²

No details of the early life of Moses are furnished by the Bible, and the want can only be supplied by the fanciful inventions of tradition. Thus Josephus tells us that he was wonderfully tall when only three years old, and so beautiful that even the common people stopped to look at him as they went by. St. Stephen, indeed, corroborates the statement as to his comeliness, which he describes as uncommon.³ A short extract from Manetho has likewise been preserved by the Jewish historian, stating that Moses was born at On, and that his name was originally Osarsiph, from Osiris, the god of On, but that he changed it into Moses,⁴ and that he was a priest of Osiris in the great Sun-temple of his native city, but was turned out of the priesthood for leprosy.⁵ Josephus adds that he was appointed general of an Egyptian army, which marched under him against the Ethiopians and won great victories; but all this rests on no authority beyond untrustworthy legend.⁶ His training in "all the wisdom of the Egyptians," must have followed as a necessary consequence from his adoption by Thermouthis,

¹ In the story of Saneha the Pharaoh is described as having "a pavilion of pure gold." *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 147.

² *Uarda*, vol. ii. pp. 236-252.

³ Acts vii. 20. See also, Heb. xi. 23.

⁴ *Contra Apion*, i. 26-28.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ The legend of Moses having led an army to Ethiopia may have risen from the title of a Son of Pharaoh having always been Messi, or Massui—Prince of Ethiopia. A high official is also called so on a rock tablet at Assouan. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 526. *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 530. Lepsius, *Königsbuch*, J. 35, No. 469

which itself incorporated him into the royal family and into the priestly caste. Tradition assigns the great Temple of the Sun at On, the chief university of Egypt, as the scene of his education, and if so his experience of Egyptian life in many striking aspects must have been wide, for the population of the Temple and its dependencies was well nigh that of a small town. Shady cloisters opened into lecture rooms for the students, and quiet houses for the professors and priests, in their many grades and offices; there being room for all in the corridors of the huge pile. Outside these, but still within the precincts, were the cottages of the temple servants, keepers of the beasts, gate-keepers, litter-bearers, water-carriers, washermen, washerwomen, and cooks; and the rooms of the *pastophoroi* who prepared the incense and perfumes. The library and writing chambers had their host of scribes, who all lived in the temple buildings, and there were besides, also as members of this huge population, the officials of the counting-house, troops of singers, and last of all, the noisy multitude of the great temple school—the Eton or Harrow of the time—from which Moses would pass upwards to the lectures of the various faculties of the university.¹

Clement of Alexandria has fortunately preserved an account of one of the many religious processions, a counterpart to which Moses must often have watched issuing from the gates of this vast sanctuary. It was in honour of Isis. The singers came first, their voices accompanied by instruments. Then followed, carrying a palm branch and his time-measurer, the horoscoper, who predicted the future from the stars: then the holy scribes, with ink, pens, and a book. The first was required to know by heart thirty-six of the forty-two books of Hermes,

¹ Ebers, *The Sisters*, vol. ii. pp. 32-34.

with the hymns to the gods, and the rules for the king : the second, those of the books of Hermes which treated of astrology : the third, to be an adept at hieroglyphics, geography, the structure of the earth, the phenomena of the Nile, and the details of measures and offerings. After these came the dressers of the god, carrying "the rod of righteousness," and a vessel for the drink offering. The chief of these was required to be skilled in all that related to the honouring of the idol. Next came the prophets, the foremost bearing a sacred vessel; others, the holy bread. The chief prophet was the president of the temple, and had committed to memory the ten books of the priests. The pastophoroi¹ or sacred physicians followed, clad in their robes like the rest, and honoured as having by heart the six books of medicine; and these were followed by others, with endless display.²

In what the "wisdom" in which Moses was trained consisted is not easy to learn, for the priestly scribes in their written allusions to it which are still extant, speak so metaphorically, and hide their meaning so studiously, that it is always more or less uncertain. They held it, indeed, as their exclusive treasure; to be communicated to none outside their circle.³ The belief in one supreme God seems, however, as is shown in the Book of the Dead, to have been the kernel of these secret doctrines; but the "wisdom" must have included much besides that was lofty and attractive, since the wisest of the Greeks—Lycurgus, Solon, Thales, Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato and others—borrowed from it many of their principles in politics, geometry, astronomy and physics. It included, also, moral and even medical precepts, and to these Moses doubtless owed much.⁴ For it is striking to notice that

¹ See p. 103.

² Clemens Alex., *Strom.*, vi. 4.

³ *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 28.

⁴ *Uhlemann*, p. 59.

the forty-two mortal sins from which the soul had to clear itself before the forty-two judges of the dead, in the next world, as a condition of a happy immortality, embrace nearly the whole Mosaic moral law; presenting, in fact, the quintessence of that universal human morality which in all ages has made mankind justly responsible for their conduct, as the "law written in their hearts," making them "by nature" ■ "law unto themselves."¹ The ibis-headed god Thoth—the scribe of the gods, known to the Greeks as Hermes Trismegistos, Hermes, the thrice greatest—was given out by the priests as having written six books on medicine, which embraced anatomy, pathology, therapeutics, and treatment of diseases of the eye; so common on the Nile. These books, composed by learned priests, would be of great value to a mind of such comprehensive genius as that of Moses. Nor must we forget that it is to Hermes or Thoth that the sublime definition of God is ascribed, as being a circle whose centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. The library of the Ramesseum at Thebes—over the gate of which was seen the inscription, "For the healing of the soul"—contained 20,000 books; nor is it without significance, as indicating a period of great intellectual activity, that the structure thus consecrated to knowledge was built by Rameses II. Statues of Thoth, the god of wisdom, and of Safekh, the goddess of history, adorned the entrance, and we even yet possess some priestly papyrus rolls dated from it. The library is, indeed, often mentioned in Egyptian book-rolls, and the graves of two of its librarians under Rameses II. are yet to be seen at Thebes. The two, it seems, were father and son, and in their life enjoyed the title of "Chief of the

¹ Rom. ii. 14, 15. See *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. ii. p. 254; vol. iii. p. 271. Lepsius, *Todtenbuch*, p. 125.

books.”¹ Nor was this the only library in the times of Moses. That of Osiris Seb is mentioned in a copy of the Book of the Dead, and there was one belonging to the temple of Ptah at Memphis, in which medical books were included. Another, also, existed later, in the Serapeion at Alexandria. The temples, like our own monasteries in the middle ages, were, in fact, the libraries of the times, and often had valuable collections of books.²

It is not probable that Moses permanently maintained associations with the royal family, after he had grown to manhood. His absence while at the University of On, if he studied there; the removal of the court to distant Thebes, which took place periodically; and, above all, his sympathy with his own race, must have practically separated him, after a time, from the splendours of the palace. The lowly home of his parents would have more attractions than the halls of his princely benefactress, grateful as he might be to her. That his feelings were intensely national is seen by the one incident recorded, in Exodus, of his Egyptian life. In a sudden access of just indignation at the sight of a native overseer cruelly illusing an Israelite, he fell on the oppressor and slew him, and as death was the inevitable punishment should the homicide be discovered, he could save his life only by a hasty flight from the country.³ His guilt,

¹ Lepsius, *Chronologie-Einleitung*, p. 39.

² *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. iii. pp. 273-4.

³ Besides the short rods for the bastinado, the “taskmasters” had long heavy scourges made of a pliant wood imported from Syria. Chabas, *Voyage d'un Egyptien*, pp. 119, 136. Old Egyptian proverbs tell of the fearful cruelty of these “drivers.” Thus, “the child grows up and his bones are broken like the bones of an ass.” “The back of a lad is made that he may hearken to him that beats him.” Chabas, *Voyage*, p. 136 n. *Papyrus Anast.*, V. viii. 6.

indeed, was exceptionally great, for he had hidden the body and thus hindered embalmment, without which the soul of the slain man would never enter into the Egyptian heaven.

The direction he took was, in all probability, straight for Pelusium or some other town on the line of the great frontier wall, offering escape into the desert beyond. He would breathe freely only when he had left Egypt behind him, and then, no course was open for him but to turn south, and seek refuge in the mountainous peninsula of Sinai. He could not, like Sineh,¹ hundred of years before, flee to Southern Palestine, for the Hittite treaty of Rameses had, as we have seen, an extradition clause, by which he would at once have been sent back to the Nile. But we can well fancy that, like Sineh, he suffered not a little on his far longer and more painful journey. "I went on foot," says that fugitive of the age before Abraham, "until I came to the fortress which the king had made to keep off the Eastern foreigners, and an old man, a herbseller, sheltered me. But I was alarmed at the sight of the watchers on the wall, who were changed daily. When the night was passed, however, and the dawn came, I went on from place to place, and arrived at the station of Kamur. But thirst overtook me on my journey, and my throat was so parched that I said 'this is the taste of death,' till, hearing the pleasant voice of cattle, I lifted up my heart, and braced my limbs. Presently I saw a Bedouin, who asked me whither I journeyed, addressing me as from Egypt. He then gave me water, and poured out milk for me, and I went with him to his tribe, and they brought me on from place to place till I arrived at Atuna."

¹ Chabas, *Les Papyrus Hieratiques de Berlin*, pp. 36-51. Maspero, p. 109. *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 135.

Moses betook himself, with a wise foresight, to the southern part of the Peninsula of Sinai, a mountainous triangle of more than 120 miles, north and south, from the line of Suez. The north of the peninsula was held by the Amalekites, but the southern portion was the district of a part of the great tribe of Midian, known as the Kenites,¹ and as such descended from Abraham through Keturah. The bond of common race would thus secure the fugitive a hearty reception, and it laid the ground, moreover, for a possible alliance against Egypt, when the Hebrews should make an effort for deliverance. Reaching the head quarters of this people, which were, as usual, near a famous well, he received, at once, a friendly welcome from the chief, to whose daughters he had shown a kindly courtesy. The simple manners among which he now found himself breathe of the early patriarchal age. His host was both the sheik and the emir of the tribe—its civil and religious head, bearing as the former the name of Jethro,—“the head man,”—and as the latter, Raguel,—“the friend of God.” Marriage to Zipporah,—“the little bird,”—one of Jethro’s daughters, of whom there were seven, soon followed. But the name of the first son of the wanderer showed that his heart was still on the banks of the Nile, among his oppressed people, for he called him Gershom, in his deep and abiding feeling that he himself was only “a stranger there.”

The region in which Moses was to spend many years—that of the Sinai mountains—was singularly fitted at once to shelter him by its seclusion from the outer world, and to train him by its influences, for the high duties which lay before him. The white limestone of Palestine and of the Wilderness of the Tih stretches into

¹ Jud. i. 16; iv. 11.

its northern portion. Beyond this, towards the south, come hills of sandstone, usually of only moderate height, but of wonderful variety and splendour of colour, and grotesqueness of shape. These, however, ere long, give way to the mountains of Sinai, which fill up the lower end of the Peninsula—vast masses of primitive rock, rising in their highest summit 9,000 feet above the sea. Memorials of the earliest age of creation, their crystalline masses have remained the same as they are to-day through all the modifications of the surface of the world. “Their granite, porphyry, mica schist and greenstone shafts, pinnacles, and buttresses have towered from the beginning over the ocean, undisturbed by the change from the Silurian age to the Devonian, from the Carboniferous to the Liassic; from the Oolite to the Chalk.”¹ No vegetation covers the bareness of the vast walls of rock, but their colours are so varied and so sharply defined that they seem, notwithstanding, to be veiled in a rich and varied world of plant life. The light-effects, moreover, in the dry pure air and under the deep blue of the sky, have an indescribable power and beauty, in their varying tints, from blinding white to deep violet. To one coming from the rich fields of the Egyptian Delta all this splendour of rock and sky cannot, however, have made up for what he had left behind, and must have seemed desolation. Yet in the days of Moses the whole region was much less barren than now. The destruction of trees age after age, for the use of the miners of ancient Egypt, and for the manufacture of charcoal, which is still carried on, has not only destroyed the forests, but has intensified the sterility of the soil by diminishing the fall of rain. Many a valley which now shows only a few stunted bushes may well have been shaded by woods 3,000 years

¹ Fraas, *Aus dem Orient*, p. 7.

ago. So late as A.D. 400 an eyewitness tells us that there was great plenty of wood and broom over the whole region—the wood not failing in any part of it.¹ Even to-day there are rich oases in at least five of the Sinai wadys, and no valley, in the very heart of the mountains, is entirely bare of vegetation. Acacias and tamarisks grow in Wadys Sheik and Gharandel in great numbers, and the palm groves of Wadys Feirân, Kid, Dahab, Noweyba, and Tor yield a rich harvest of fine dates. Broom bushes and other thorny growths, and a great variety of strong-scented plants, especially thyme, nestle in the cracks of the steepest precipices. The broad-leaved colocynth grows in the sandy plains on the border of the wilderness of the Tih, and the bright green of the caper plant makes a striking contrast to the dark leaves of the swallow-wort or asclepia on many a wall of rock. Thousands of goats and sheep find sufficient pasture during the whole year, and many chamois and mountain badgers frequent the almost inaccessible gorges of the heights. Panthers also are met with in these upland valleys. Singing birds enliven the copses by the clear cool springs of the mica schist, and, occasionally, huge flocks of quails, wearied by their long flight from the west, over the Red Sea, settle for the time on the rocky slopes and open plains. Wild ducks, moreover, abound in the small lakes of one or two of the Wadys. Nor is the land, alone, thus, in a measure, astir with life. The dugong seal is still, at times, caught in the bays on each side of the Peninsula; its thick hide being much prized for sandals to protect the feet from the many acacia thorns in every path. Even with the rude appliances of the Arabs, moreover, the take of fish and molluscs from the neighbouring Red Sea

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 351.

is very large.¹ Snakes both poisonous and harmless, are numerous in some parts.

But, as a whole, the Sinai mountains rank among the wildest regions. From a distance they rise, red and grey, in huge masses and peaks of porphyry and granite. On all sides lie heaps of dark ashes of burnt-out volcanic fires, or of fragments of porphyry, red as wax. Walls of rocks, with a green shimmer, rise naked and threatening: uncouth, wild crags tower steeply above mounds of black and brown stones, which look as if they had been broken by the hammers of giants. The horizon takes new forms with every short advance, as one closed-in valley rises above another; the sublimity of the landscape increasing with the ascent. As each new level is reached the mountains rise in huge heights around, but as the journey leads on to the next plateau they seem to shrink into tameness before the new giants that encircle the way.² "Were I a painter," says Ebers, "and could I illustrate Dante's *Inferno*, I would have pitched my camp-stool here, and have filled my sketchbook, for there could never be wanting to the limner of the dark abyss of the Pit, landscapes savage, terribly, immeasurably sad, unutterably wild, unapproachably grand and awful."³

The influence of such a district on a mind like that of Moses must have been great. No region more favourable to the attainments of a lofty conception of the Almighty could have been found. Nature, by the want of water and the poverty of vegetation, is intensely simple; presenting no variety to dissipate and confuse the mind. The grand, sublimely silent mountain world around, with its bold, abrupt masses of granite, greenstone and porphyry, fills the spirit with a solemn earnestness which

¹ Furrer, *Sinai*, in *Schenkel*, vol. v. p. 327.

² *Durch Gosen*, p. 131.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

the wide horizon from most peaks and the wonderful purity of the air tend to heighten. The wanderer looks down, for example, from the top of Jebel Mûsa, the Mount of Moses, with a shuddering horror, into the abyss below ;—and round, on the countless pinnacles and peaks, cliffs and precipices, of many coloured rocks; white



VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF SINAI.

By Permission. From Prof. Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*.

and grey, sulphurous yellow, blood red, and ominous black; entirely bare of vegetation. To the north, the desert of the Tih stretches out beyond the mountains in endless perspective. On the east and west the reflection of the blue sea shimmers up from the depths; beyond it, towards sunrising, are seen the pale sands of Arabia; while towards sunset the mountains of Egypt rise half

veiled in the blue of distance. Such a place was far more fitted than the narrowly hemmed-in valley of the Nile, or than Palestine, to call forth great thoughts.”¹

In such a desert region we take refuge in our own reflections from the monotony around; the senses are at rest. Undisturbed and uninfluenced from without, the mind follows out every train of thought to the end, and examines and exhausts every feeling to its finest shades. In a city there is no solitude: each is part of a great whole on which he acts, and by which he is himself affected. But the lonely wanderer in a district like Sinai is absolutely isolated from his fellows, and must fill up the void by his own identity. The present retires into the background, and the spirit, waked to intensity of life, finds no limits to its thoughts. In a lofty spiritual nature like that of Moses,² the solemn stillness of the mountains and the boundless sweep of the daily and nightly heavens would efface the thought of man, and fill the soul with the majesty of God. As he meditated on the possible deliverance of his people, the lonely vastness would raise him above anxious contrasts of their weakness compared with the power of Egypt, which might have paralysed resolution and bidden hope despair. What was man, whose days were a handbreadth, and whose foundation was in the dust, before the mighty Creator of Heaven and Earth—the Rock of Israel? ³ Even less lofty spirits than his had, indeed, been kindled, age after age, to a nearer sense of the presence of God, amidst these magnificent and awful solitudes; for Serbal had been from the earliest times sacred to the worship of Baal, and, even still, the

¹ Furrer, *Die Bedeutung* der Bib. Geographie für der Bib. Exegese*, p. 5. Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. pp. 3, 544, 548, 584.

² Uarda, vol. ii. p. 193.

³ Geikie's *Life and Words of Christ*, vol. i. p. 382.

wandering Bedouin sacrifices lambs within stone circles raised on it, as thank-offerings for any special blessing received.¹ So Horeb, already bore the name of "the Mount of God" when Moses came to live near it,² and the whole group of mountains, like Ararat or the Himalaya, were holy among the tribes around.³

In this sanctuary of the hills, awaiting the time when the advancing purposes of God had ripened Israel for the great movement of its deliverance, and, meanwhile, unconsciously preparing for the mighty task before him, Moses spent, as St. Stephen informs us, no fewer than forty years.⁴ His wanderings would make him acquainted with every valley, plain, gorge, hill, and mountain of the whole region; with its population whether native, or that of the Egyptian mines; with every spring and well, and with all the resources of every kind offered by any spot: an education of supreme importance towards fitting him to guide his race, when rescued from Egypt, to the safe shelter and holy sanctuaries of this predestined scene of their long ex. campment. Still more, in those calm years every problem to be solved in the organization of a people would rise successively in his mind and find its solution; and above all, his own soul must have been disciplined and purified, by isolation from the world and closer and more continual communion with God.⁵

¹ Sepp, *Jerusalem u. das Heilige Land*, vol. ii. p. 776.

² Exod. iv. 27.

³ Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 63.

⁴ Acts vii. 30.

⁵ Bertheau thinks that Moses in Midian would come in contact with a form of the faith of Abraham, preserved in Jethro's tribes, purer than survived among the Jews in Egypt. *Geschichte*, p. 242.



CHAPTER V.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

THE long interval during which Moses lived in Midian as a humble shepherd, must have been one of ripening progress towards future deliverance on the part of the Hebrews on the Nile. Parents whose home training had resulted in a family like Miriam, Aaron, and Moses—true to the God of their fathers, and, as such, filled with an intense aversion to the religion of Egypt—could not have been the only instances of a hereditary loyalty to the faith and aspirations of Israel. Doubtless Amram and Jochebed bore in their names¹ the proud assertion of a creed cherished by not a few of their race besides, even in these dark times. There had been, it may well be believed, too much indifference to the memories of Bethel and Beersheba; but trouble had quickened the religious feelings of the nation, and given a value, which had not latterly been assigned them, to the promises made by Jehovah to Abraham and his descendants.² This great spiritual revolution was brought about, so far as can now be seen, through the agency of the tribe of Levi, to which the parents of Moses belonged, and their children lived to be its chief promoters. But Amram and Jochebed doubtless received from others of

¹ *Gesenius*, 8th ed. See *ante*, p. 90.

² *Exod.* ii. 23.

a former generation, the Puritan impulse which their family was destined to spread so widely and to conduct to such triumphant results. That their tribe should hereafter be honoured with the national priesthood was, therefore, its natural inheritance. It was through it, in Egypt, that its brethren turned again to Jehovah, and it was by the efforts of its sons, Aaron and Moses, that they became a people. Pioneers of national revival, religious and political, perhaps for generations, in Egypt, the tribe of Levi was designated from the first, alike by its past services and its special fitness, for the dignity ultimately assigned to it.

Aaron was doubtless the chief agent in this great work, but he would have the assistance of the "elders" of the people; that is of the heads or "princes" of tribes, of clans, of subclans, and of households, in spreading his influence through the whole population. To do so, however, with any aid, would be no easy task; for the masses are slow to rouse to spiritual ideas, especially when crushed by a hard life. Yet it was essential they should be thus quickened. To free them in a merely physical sense would have left them unfitted for their high destiny as the People of God. The foundation of a permanent and earnest recognition of Jehovah as their national God, demanded that the contrast between the true and the false should be brought home to them and burnt into their hearts, while they were still surrounded by Egyptian idolatry, and aglow with enthusiasm against its votaries, as their oppressors. Nor is it without significance that the Greek Bible speaks of God as gradually "becoming known to them."¹ The Hebrew overseers in charge of each gang of their brethren, under the

¹ The words, ch. ii. 25, "God had respect unto them," are in the *Septuagint*, "God became known unto them."

Egyptian taskmasters, doubtless showed them a sympathy which extended beyond their physical sufferings; for these overseers or "officers"¹ are elsewhere identified with the "elders," who were in close communication with Aaron.² The heads of each clan or sub-clan were evidently made responsible for the behaviour of those connected with them, and tribal communication was thus intimately maintained. That Aaron should have gone to Sinai to meet his brother Moses speaks, moreover, of his work being at last ripe for great results, and of a correspondence having been maintained between the two through the years of their separation; if only by messages carried by traders passing through Jethro's district.

The preparation of Moses for his great task must, like that for all high aims and spheres, have been gradual and slow. To feel oneself summoned to play the part of a prophet of God implies an elevation, an enthusiasm, and a concentration of soul only attained by degrees. The outward duties of such an office must indeed be the spontaneous expression of profound personal conviction, rising above all doubt and question where others hesitate

¹ Exod. v. 6, 14, 19. The word is *shoterim*. Even the seventy elders are so called, Num. xi. 16. So are, afterwards, the heads of the different sections of the tribes, in the march through the wilderness. Deut. xx. 9; xxix. 9; xxxi. 28. Josh. i. 10; iii. 2; viii. 33; xxiii. 2; xxiv. 1. The municipal dignitaries of the towns of Israel also bore, in after days, this name. Deut. xvi. 18. 1 Chron. xxiii. 4; xxvi. 29. The *shoterim* seem to have had charge of the genealogical records of the tribes.

² Exod. iv. 29. It is noteworthy that Pharaoh complains of the people "listening to lying talk," about going off to sacrifice in the wilderness. This shows that their leaders had access to them, and we may feel sure that they had long used this privilege to quicken them to worthy thoughts. See Exod. v. 9.

most, and this is necessarily slowly reached. Every utterance of the prophetic impulse ultimately exhibited by Moses, implies that the existence and continual presence of God, as the supreme directing and controlling force in all human affairs, must have been realized by him with an overpowering vividness, carrying with it his whole nature. It may be that his flight, after killing the Egyptian taskmaster, was the first step towards this lofty inspiration, by breaking off every tie with Egypt, and committing him unreservedly to the cause of his people. For, though his heart had always been theirs, even amidst the learned seclusion of the temple cloisters at On, or the splendours of the palace at Tanis—and though he had often stolen away to mingle with those whom he loved as “his brethren,” and to sympathize with them in their “burdens”—his flight must have first set him free from an embarrassing position, and left him wholly at their service.

The prophet, in the true meaning of the word, is the mouth of God among men, whether in respect to the present or the future. Prediction is only one form of the Divine communications he announces. To proclaim the present purposes and will of God is his main commission. But to rise to a condition of mind in which he thus becomes the articulate voice of the Eternal to his fellow-men must come by a natural advance. Before the spirit can thus be filled with the Divine, like a lamp with light, it must have been long concentrated on it to a degree unknown to other men. Earth must well nigh have disappeared, before the heavens thus open as the familiar home of the thoughts. The Unseen must have become the great reality, before which the visible and temporal rank as infinitely subordinate. In this sense Moses was, at once, the first and the greatest of the prophets, for no

one before Christ has spoken in the name of God with such commanding majesty, or shed such a flood of light on the Divine nature and laws. All future prophets draw their light from his central splendour, for he established in the hearts of his race the great truths which his successors had but to press home on their contemporaries. The burning bush of Horeb was, indeed, only a symbol of the sacred fire which glowed through his being, and kindled in the world; unextinguishably, the light of the true religion. But what long wrestlings of soul; what ponderings over the mysteries of nature as seen around and above him; what mental struggles with the teachings of his Egyptian masters; what contrasts of the gods of the Nile Valley in all their higher and lower aspects, with the traditional faith in the One living and true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, must have passed through his soul, before Jehovah stood out alone, supreme, universal, as the holy Lord God of heaven and earth! To think one's way, even with all supernatural aids, to such a stupendous conclusion, in the clearness and intensity with which it rose before him, sets him apart among men; for the God of Moses, though also the God of Abraham, is revealed with infinitely fuller circumstance, in His relations to mankind and in the disclosures of His own Being. Revelation doubtless poured into his soul the light by which it realized such truths, but his whole nature must have strained towards that light with a grand earnestness, to have been fitted for such communications. In spiritual things, it is ever to those only who have, that it can be given.

Apart from this concentrated Divine enthusiasm, however, raising him slowly, through years, to the conviction that he was called to be a prophet to his people, and to speak to them, as such, for God; the vast task before

Moses demanded the intellect of a statesman, a legislator, and an organizer on a grand scale, and it was the union of these with his supreme authority as the recognized mouthpiece of God, that qualified him supremely for his great work.

It was in the wilderness of Sinai, the Bible tells us, amidst the mountains of Horeb—"the dry,"—a name for the vast heights of the Sinai group as a whole,—while he was feeding the flocks of his father-in-law, that Moses was first honoured with the Divine communication which transformed him, henceforth, in his whole nature, by bringing to a crisis the inarticulate dreams and spiritual aspirations of the past. Tradition has fixed the spot, since the sixth century, in the deep seclusion to which he afterwards led the children of Israel, and the convent of Justinian is built over what is held to have been the very spot where he was commanded to put the sandals from off his feet. But whether this "valley of Jethro," or the plain at Mount Serbal, was the scene of the event, the circumstances around were equally fitting. The awful majesty of the hills which, as Josephus tells us,¹ had already invested them with a special sacredness in the eyes of the Arab tribes as "the Mountains of God," looked down on the wanderer from every side. He had followed his flocks of sheep and goats as they sought the aromatic shrubs on the ledges of the rock, or in the folds of the narrow valleys, or by the side of chance springs; little thinking to what they were leading him. The wild acacia, the seneh of the Hebrew Bible—a gnarled and thorny tree, not unlike our solitary hawthorn in its growth,² dotted the bare slopes and the burning soil of the ravines. But now, suddenly, a glow of flame, like that which was consuming Israel in the furnace of

¹ *Ant.*, II. xii. 1.

² Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 391.

affliction, shines forth amidst the dry branches of one of these before him, and yet, as he gazes, "the bush," though "it burned with fire," was not consumed. Drawing near to "see this great sight," a voice which he instinctively recognizes as Divine sounds from its midst, commanding him to remove his sandals, as on holy ground;¹ revealing new and closer relations of God to His chosen people, and imposing on the awed shepherd a unique commission as His prophet. He had been known to their forefathers, and was known by themselves, by names more or less used by related peoples, in speaking of their gods—the names El, or Elohim, or Shaddai—"the mighty One." They had, indeed, also used the name Jehovah, but its wide import had never been fully revealed to them.² Henceforth, the gulf between the true God and the idols of Egypt and of the nations, should be marked by the adoption of the name Jehovah in its full significance, as expressive of the One only Living God—the true "I AM WHOM I AM," the mysterious Fountain of all Being. "Go to your brethren, the children of Israel," continued the Divine voice, "and say to them 'Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. This shall be My name for ever: so shall you call Me for ever and ever.'"³ All other gods

¹ "Our habit of respect is to take off the hat: theirs, to take off their shoes. Consequently, they never enter their places of worship, or generally their own rooms, without taking them off and leaving them at the doors."—Mill's *Samaritans*, pp. 107, 225.

² Oehler, in *Herzog*, vol. vi. p. 460.

³ Gesenius, *Lex.*, 8th edition, art. *Zächer*, p. 239. It is striking how this supreme name of God had its echoes in other nations than Israel—perhaps from the first age of innocence. Iaō was at times the name assigned by the Greeks to the highest God (Macrob., *Saturn.*, i. 18). The Chaldeans spoke of Iaō,

were mere Elilim¹—"nothings"—had no existence, but were only inventions of man. He alone, by the very name Jehovah, proclaimed Himself as the One Living God. Moses was to tell his brethren that this mighty Being—mindful of His covenant with Abraham—was about to deliver them from oppression, and gather them beneath the mountains where the Voice then spoke; that He might give them their future laws as His people, and afterwards lead them to the good land which He had promised to their fathers.

Instinctively shrinking from an office at once so lofty and so difficult, Moses naturally craves special assurances of God's presence with him, before he can face the majesty of Pharaoh, or hope to rouse the apathy of a down-trodden race. But these, also, are given him. Overpowered with the vision, and yet divinely exalted in soul; shrinking in humility as he thinks of himself, but strong in a holy trust as he remembers Jehovah, he turns back to his flock another man. Henceforth, he is in the fullest sense inspired, and rises to the height of the great enterprise committed to him. If he be slow of speech, has not Jehovah said that Aaron would speak for him to Pharaoh and to the people; he himself acting, through him, as the representative of God. It would thus be his to indicate: Aaron would put his instructions in fitting words. To himself it was vouchsafed to stand to the people in the place of God; to Aaron he would be as God is to a prophet whom He inspires.² Did he wish

and the Ichthyophagi are said to have used the name Iaō Sabaoth, as a charm or spell in their fishing. See Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 29. Perhaps these nations borrowed the name from the Hebrews.

¹ Ps. xcvi. 5.

² Knobel's *Prophetismus*, vol. i. p. 104. Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 86.

a symbol of his high office? Had not the shepherd's rod in his hand been already made the instrument of Divine power. His task was to be performed by no mere human aid. Had he been required to front the majesty of Egypt by raising an insurrection and trusting to military success, he might well have despaired; for how could the multitudes of an enslaved population win the day against disciplined armies? But the peaceful symbol he bore—the staff with which he had guided his kinsman's flocks—spoke, as the wonders he had already seen wrought by it showed, of an invisible Power before whom the might of the Pharaohs availed nothing. In the modest humility of such an emblem he could go forward, assured that Jehovah who had sent him would also fight the battle for Israel.¹ For, had not this simple rod, at the bidding of

¹ The incident of the circumcision of Gershom, the son of Moses, at the caravanserai, on the way to Egypt, is striking. Moses had neglected to perform the rite and was suddenly struck by severe illness, which he traced to this oversight of his duty. Zipporah, learning the fact, forthwith circumcises the child, and Moses presently recovers; on which Zipporah tells him that she has won him again for her bridegroom by the child's blood; that his life is spared on account of it, and she has him, as it were, given to her anew—now this duty is fulfilled. *Exod. iv. 24-27*. That the "sons" of Moses should be set on an ass, implies that they were of tender years, so that his marriage must have taken place long after his going to Midian, or the birth of his children must have been long delayed. Herodotus says that the Arabs were wont to confirm covenants by cutting their middle finger with a sharp stone (*iii. 8*). In the case of Moses it was fitting that the covenant made with Abraham, and now virtually renewed with himself, should be solemnized by the sign divinely appointed at its first institution. But it marks strikingly the extent to which the patriarchal faith had passed from the common Hebrew mind, that even Moses should have neglected to circumcise his children. Gesenius quotes with approval the statement of some Jewish expositors, that a mother called her son "spouse" when he was circumcised. *Thesaurus* p. 539.

God, turned to an angry serpent, the symbol of death, and had not the hand that held it been alternately withered and restored by the same Voice? Had not the vision of the burning bush shown that though thorns could not of themselves resist the shining flames, but were, rather, the very thing that would most easily fall a prey to them, a Power was at hand who protected even what was so frail? Israel might be unable in itself to oppose Egypt, but its Redeemer was mighty. As God was in the flame of the bush and hindered its consuming that in which it glowed, so He was with His people in their trials, and would keep them from being destroyed. They would be saved, not by the skill or intellect of any leader, but only by the power and loving-kindness of Jehovah Himself. Their deliverance should be so clearly His work alone, that they would in all future ages see in it a pledge of His having divinely chosen them for His own, and of His tender love and pity towards them.¹

The meeting of Aaron with his brother must have filled both hearts with joy and confidence in God, for if Moses had to speak of heavenly encouragement in their great enterprise, so had Aaron. He had to report besides, that the Hebrews, their brethren, were at last, after long years, roused once more to an enthusiasm for the religion of their fathers, which insured their co-operation in any plan for speedy deliverance from the burden of Egyptian slavery, and the hated presence of Egyptian idolatry. Nor was it necessary to wait any length of time for the proof of this. All the elders of Israel being summoned and told of the approaching crisis, the tidings soon spread through every division of the tribes, and were received with universal joy. The elders indeed could report that "the people believed,

¹ Köhler's *Lehrbuch der Bib.-Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 174.

and rejoiced that Jehovah had visited them" through His chosen messengers, and that they had bowed their heads and worshipped.¹

The struggle which had now come to a head between Israel and Egypt, was at once a revolt of slaves against their masters and the conflict of one religion with another. The Pharaoh had aimed at destroying the nationality of the Hebrews and incorporating them with the general population, but this involved their accepting Egyptian idolatry. Israel had, however, clung with a desperate tenacity to the faith of their race, and craved leave to perform the sacrifices it demanded. But these required the slaughter of rams and oxen—the former sacred to Amon; the latter the symbol of Osiris and Isis—and to kill animals thus sacred, would have roused the whole nation to exterminate a people guilty of such impiety. It was inevitable that if these sacrifices were to be offered at all, the Hebrews must be allowed to go outside the bounds of the kingdom.

Demanding an audience, therefore, from Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron requested that their brethren should be permitted to go a three days' journey to the wilderness, and there hold a solemn religious festival to their God.² The refusal of a proposal so fair and moderate would at once justify their obtaining for themselves this natural right, and with it their personal freedom, by any worthy means that offered.

The Pharaoh who now reigned was Menephtah I., the thirteenth son of Rameses II., who had died after reign-

¹ Exod. iv. 31. *Sept.* and *Knobel*.

² The Egyptians had their own religious pilgrimages and sacrificial festivals, at Bubastis, Busiris, Sais, Heliopolis, Boutos, and Papremis. *Herod.*, ii. 59. See also Vaihinger, *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1872, p. 374.

ing well-nigh seventy years, leaving many survivors of his immense family of 170 children.¹ Menephtah was already a man of about sixty when he ascended the throne, and he held his court habitually in Lower Egypt; at Memphis, On, and Tanis or Zoan,² where monuments bearing his name still exist, thus corroborating the statement of the Bible, that it was at Zoan Moses encountered him.³

From the time of Seti I., the grandfather of Menephtah, the people of Libya had threatened the western frontier of Egypt, but the vigour of Rameses II. had driven them back, and held them in check while he lived. After his death, however, things changed. A great alliance was formed by the Libyans with the Greeks—of whom this is the first historical mention known—the Sicilians, the Etruscans, the Sardinians, and the Lycians,—and Egypt was invaded from the north, by sea and land. In such a time the persecution of the Hebrews must have been suspended, for it would have been madness to have tempted them, by ill-treatment, to join the invaders, who were finally driven off after “days and months,” leaving the unusual number of 9,376 prisoners in the hands of Menephtah.⁴ Mounds of hands and dismembered limbs laid at his feet attested the ferocity of

¹ Lenormant's *Manuel*, vol. i. p. 423. Birch's *Ancient Egypt from the Monuments*, p. 133. Ebers, in *Reichm.*, p. 333. Maspero, p. 258. De Rougé, *Examen Critique de l'Ouvrage de M. le Chevalier de Bunsen*, 2nd partie, p. 74.

² Chabas, *Recherches sur la XIX^e Dynastie*, pp. 79, 80. Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 3rd series, vol. ii. pp. 117, 161.

³ Ps. lxxviii. 12, 43.

⁴ Inscription at Karnak translated in *Records of the Past*, vol. iv. 37-48; also by De Rougé in the *Revue Archæologique*, 1867, p. 167; and by Chabas, *Études de l'Antiquité Historique*, Paris, 1870-73. Ebers, *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 154.

the Egyptian troops, especially the cavalry, of whom Menephtah particularly boasts. But besides these, there were more valuable spoils: multitudes of horses and oxen, over 9,000 copper swords, 1,308 bulls, many goats, 54 gold vases, a number of silver drinking cups, and more than 3,000 of other materials; coats of mail, skin tents, and much else.

Peace once more established, the oppression of the Hebrews recommenced with additional severity; perhaps from the doubtful attitude taken by them during the invasion; but, it may be, only from the natural fear that a people so numerous, so vigorous, so distinct from the Egyptians, and so fiercely opposed to the national religion, should hereafter give trouble if fresh complications arose. Among other precautions, Menephtah, like his father, took up his residence, usually, at Memphis or at Tanis-Zoan, whence he could most easily dominate the alien populations of the Delta, and stand as it were on guard, at the entrance of Egypt, against invasion from Syria or Arabia. An allusion occurs, in the inscription which records the great Libyan inroad, to the condition of these parts after peace had been restored, and also in the old Hyksos days. On¹ or Heliopolis and Memphis were additionally fortified; other places which had been ruined were rebuilt, and lines of defence were thrown up at weak parts; perhaps in part as measures of repression towards the Hebrews. Then follows a glance at the condition of the Delta and Lower Egypt, generally, in the old Hyksos times, and since. "Never was the like devastation seen as in the invasion of the Libyans and their allies—not even in the times of the kings of Lower Egypt, when the land lay in the hand of

¹ The Septuagint adds the name of On to those of Pithom and Rameses, as a city on which the Hebrews performed forced labour.

the enemy, and misery reigned—in the times when the kings of Upper Egypt could not drive the invaders out. (In the Libyan invasion) the open lands were left untilled, as pasture for cattle, because of the barbarians. These parts had been infested from the times of our ancestors, when the kings of Upper Egypt lay in their tombs, and when those of Lower Egypt, in the midst of their towns, were surrounded by dwellings of corruption.¹ Their troops had not auxiliaries enough to enable them to act efficiently.”² The Delta was still, as in the past, the weak point of Egypt, from the large foreign element in its population, holding close relations to the inexhaustible hostile regions outside. The whole position of affairs, after the expulsion of the Libyans and their European and Asiatic allies, might naturally suggest the sternest measures towards the already dangerously numerous Hebrews.

Tanis, the scene of the plagues by which Pharaoh was at last compelled to yield to the demands of Moses, has been already described.³ Fortunately we have on one of the walls of the great temple of Karnak, a plan of it, made in the time of Seti I., grandfather of Menephtah, before it had been enlarged and beautified by Rameses II. The Tanis branch of the Nile flows through the town and its suburbs, and is crossed by a bridge. In the water are crocodiles and aquatic plants. The sea, not far off, is also represented, with its fish;⁴ for in those days the ships of Palestine and other countries

¹ An alien population.

² *Records of the Past*, vol. iv. p. 41. Ebers, *Ægypten*, p. 207. Vigouroux, vol. ii. p. 248. Chabas, *Récherches*, p. 94.

³ Page 24.

⁴ Brugsch, *Inscript. Geog.*, I. pl. 48. *La Sortie des Hébreux d'Égypte*, Conférence, Alexandrie, 1874, p. 20.

could sail up to the wharves of Tanis, though the canal which now represents the river is only navigable for the fisher-boats from Lake Menzaleh.

Menephtah was about twenty years younger than Moses, and had doubtless heard of his early life in the palace, and of his subsequent flight and its cause. Time, however, had long effaced these recollections, for even the flight had happened forty years before. But to make any impression on a Pharaoh, in favour of despised slaves, needed more than words, however reasonable or weighty. Menephtah had been taught to regard his lightest fancy as the law which all must obey. That he should be required to do the least trifle against his pleasure was inconceivable. Court laureates had addressed him in odes, one of which, still preserved, is doubtless a sample of many. He was, they told him, "the lover of truth," "the sun in the great heaven, enlightening the earth with his goodness, and chasing the darkness from Egypt."

"Thou art, as it were, the image of thy father, the Sun
Who rises in heaven. . . . No place is without thy goodness.
Thy sayings are the law of every land. . . .
Bright is thy eye above the stars of heaven: able to gaze at
The sun. Whatever is spoken, even in secret, ascends to
Thine ears. Whatever is done in secret, thy eye sees it,
O! Baeura Meriamen,¹ merciful Lord, creator of breath!"²

The first approaches of Moses and Aaron to this man-

¹ A name of Menephtah II. The expression of belief that he was the true living representative of Deity on earth was doubtless sincere, for all men in Egypt, as has been already said, worshipped the Pharaoh as the incarnate sun-god. Proofs of this are met with constantly.

² *Papyrus Anastasi*, translated by Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 1870, p. 117, and by Mr. Goodwin, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. p. 353. *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 101.

god, on behalf of their people, the despised beings by whose labour he was executing the public works of the district, only drew down on the sufferers a heavier lot. Hitherto they had been allowed straw to chop into lengths, to use in binding the clay they had to make into bricks; but now they were to get it where they could, from the stubble fields far and near; the same number of bricks as before being still demanded from them.¹ It must have been sometime about the end of April; for the wheat harvest is then just over in Egypt and leaves the plains of the Delta covered with standing straw—soon to be gathered and burnt: the reapers in Ancient as in Modern Egypt cutting off the grain close to the ear. The Nile would be at its lowest, and the hot sand wind from the Sahara would have begun to blow, as it does for fifty days together at that season, making the heat almost unendurable. But the Hebrews had to face it, and waste their strength and lives on their impossible task.² The burden had become intolerable, but deliverance was at hand.

The signs and plagues by which Menephtah was in the end compelled to let the Hebrews go, began, we are told, with a repetition of the wonder that had already been wrought at Horeb—the turning a rod into a serpent: a miracle imitated, however, by the “magicians of Egypt.”³ The great lesson of all these manifestations—the superiority of Jehovah to the idols of Egypt—was in none, however, more vividly shown than in this, by “Aaron’s rod swallowing up” all the others.⁴

¹ Exod. v. 15 ff.

² Osburn, *Israel in Egypt*, p. 252.

³ Exod. vii. 11.

⁴ All official Egyptians carried rods in their hands, as indications of their rank, etc.

The jugglers and magicians of the East have in every age exhibited feats of skill, or of unholy powers, which startle the senses and seem to defy explanation. Egypt especially was the land of "the black art," which indeed got that name from the dark colour of the soil of the Nile Valley.¹ Exodus supplies us with the names of some classes of its wonder-workers—the Hakamim, or wise men, who specially dealt in secret arts; the Mēkashphim, who muttered magic spells and adjurations for driving away spirits, or the more tangible dangers of crocodiles, asps, snakes and the like;² and the Hartummim, who were, as Brugsch tells us, the high priests presiding at the different religious services in the very city of Zoan-Tanis, where Moses and Aaron wrought their miracles. Their name means, we are told, "the warriors," in allusion to the myths of conflicts of the gods, so common in Egypt.³ This class was, perhaps, equivalent to "the sacred scribes,"⁴ and appear to have been at once the literary men of their temples, and skilled in uttering spells by the use of sacred names and words.⁵ In this relation they were the "scribes of occult writings," and formed, with the other classes named, the council of the Pharaoh, to consult the magic books for him, when summoned. The names of the two chief opponents of Moses and Aaron, Jannes and Jambres, have been preserved by St. Paul,⁶ and are both Egyptian. An or Annu, which

¹ Alchemy means "pretended science," and is derived from Kemia = black—the native name of Egypt. Hence it was "the black art."

² See references in the *Book of the Dead*.

³ Brugsch, *The Exodus and the Egyptian Monuments*, Trans. Orient. Congress, London, 1874, p. 273. Dillmann (*Exodus*, p. 68) rejects this etymology.

⁴ Ebers, *Ägypten*, etc., p. 341.

⁵ *Speaker's Comment*, vol. i. p. 279.

⁶ 2 Tim. iii. 8.

is identical with "scribe," being frequently found in writings of the date of Moses, while Jambres is the name of a sacred book, and may mean "Scribe of the South."¹ Buxtorff gives some of the traditions of the later Jews respecting them, under the names of Jochanna and Mamre. They were said to have been sons of Balaam and to have perished with Pharaoh in the Red Sea, but it is idle to repeat such inventions at any length.²

Like all the other "signs" and plagues, that of the rod turned into a serpent was a direct challenge from Jehovah to the idols of Egypt; for serpents were worshipped in various parts of the country,³ and the living symbol of the god of Pithom, a town of the Hebrew district, was one of these creatures, dignified with the name of "the Magnificent," and "the Splendid."⁴ The asp was also the symbol of the god Kneph—the creator and sustainer of the world,⁵ and Serapis was frequently represented with a serpent's body.⁶ To discredit this reptile, therefore, at once dishonoured a multitude of Egyptian gods, for their utter impotence as compared with Jehovah could have had no more signal illustration, than the vanishing of all the rods of the magicians before that of Aaron.

¹ *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 279.

² Buxtorff's *Lex. Ch. et Tal.* pp. 948-9. Rosenmüller, *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 275.

³ *Herod.*, ii. 74. Eusebius speaks of two serpents worshipped at Thebes, as the greatest of all the gods.

⁴ Brugsch, *The Exodus and the Egyptian Monuments*, p. 269.

⁵ Creuzer's *Symbolik*, p. 166.

⁶ Winer, *Schlange*. Lane, in his *Modern Egyptians*, states that each quarter of Cairo has a special guardian genius, in the form of a serpent. This is no doubt a relic of ancient serpent worship.

How the feats narrated of these wonder-workers were performed it is impossible to tell, but it is certain that, in both ancient and modern times, conjurers in the East have boasted of amazing power over serpents. An African race, the Psylli, were believed to be proof against their bites, handling them recklessly, in reliance on the protection of spells and incantations. Throwing them into a helpless lethargy, they then played with them as mock rods or staves.¹ Even at this day Egyptian jugglers are accustomed to catch a serpent by the head, and by some strange power make it stiff and motionless, as if changed into a rod.²

The second "sign" and first "plague"—the turning the waters of Egypt into blood—was a blow at the whole religion of Egypt, than which none could have been more impressive, whether to the Egyptians or Hebrews. The Nile was, in the strictest sense, regarded as divine, and was worshipped under a variety of names. A hymn as old as the days of Moses, still preserved, shows how deeply this reverence had taken hold of the Egyptian mind.³

¹ See authorities in Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 61. *Dillmann*, p. 69.

² Champollion-Figeac, *Egypten*, p. 26. On serpent charming in Egypt, see *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 236. In the *Description de l'Égypte*, vol. xxiv. p. 82, it is said, "They can turn the Kajé (a serpent) into a stick and make it appear dead. They then revive it, when they choose, holding it by the tail and rolling it briskly between their hands." See also, for extraordinary feats performed with poisonous snakes, Drummond Hay's *Western Barbary*, p. 64. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 272.

³ *Papyrus Sallier*, I. 11–13. *Anastasi*, VII. It is translated by Canon Cook, *Records of the Past*, pp. 4, 105. Dümichen, *Gesch. des Alten Ägyptens*, p. 11. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 11. The two latter translations are wonderfully alike, but both differ considerably from that of Canon Cook.

"Hail to thee, O Nile!

Thou who hast revealed thyself to this land,

Coming in peace, to give life to Egypt!

Hidden god! who bringest what is dark to light,

As is always thy delight!

Thou who waterest the fields created by the Sun-god;

To give life to all the world of living things.

Thou it is who coverest all the land with water.

Thy path, as thou comest, is from heaven!

Thou art the god Set, the friend of bread!

Thou art the god Neptra, the giver of grain!

Thou art the god Ptah, who lightenest every dwelling!

Lord of Fishes, when thou risest over the flooded lands

Thou protectest the fields from the birds.

Creator of wheat: Producer of barley;

Thou sustainest the temples.

When the hands of millions of the wretched are idle, he grieves.

If he do not rise, the gods in heaven fall on their faces, and men die.

He makes the whole land open before the plough of the oxen,

And great and small rejoice.

Men invoke him when he delays his coming,

And then he appears as the life-giving god Khnoum.

When he rises the land is filled with gladness,

Every mouth rejoices: all living things have nourishment: all teeth their food.

Bringer of Food! Creator of all good things!

Lord of all things choice and delightful,

If there be offerings, it is thanks to thee!

He maketh grass to grow for the oxen;

He prepares sacrifices for every god,

The choice incense is that which he supplies!

He cannot be brought into the sanctuaries,

His abode is not known;

There is no house that can contain him!

There is no one who is his counsellor!

He wipes away tears from all eyes!

* * * *

O Nile, hymns are sung to thee on the harp;

Offerings are made to thee: oxen are slain to thee;

Great festivals are kept for thee: fowls are sacrificed to thee:
Incense ascends unto heaven:
Oxen, bulls, fowls, are burned!
Mortals, extol him! and ye cycle of gods!
His Son (the Pharaoh) is made Lord of all,
To enlighten all Egypt.
Shine forth, shine forth, O Nile, shine forth!"

As the bountiful Osiris,¹ and under many other divine names, the Nile was the beneficent god of Egypt—the representative of all that was good. Evil, however, had also its god, the deadly enemy of Osiris—the hated Typhon—the source of all that was cruel, violent, and wicked. With this abhorred being the touch or sight of blood was associated. He himself was represented as blood-red; red oxen and even red-haired men were sacrificed to him, and blood, as his symbol, rendered all unclean who came near it. To turn the Nile waters into blood was thus to defile the sacred river—to make Typhon triumph over Osiris—and to dishonour the religion of the land in one of its supremest expressions.

The law of Divine government by which, even when miraculous results are to be produced, natural phenomena are utilized as far as they go, has led to many attempts to explain the change effected on the waters of Egypt, as caused by a special employment of ordinary means. Thus it is known that the Nile at a certain stage of its yearly rise assumes a red colour. "The sun," says Mr. Osburn, "was just rising over the Arabian hills, and I was surprised to see that the moment its beams struck the water a deep red reflection was caused. The intensity of the red grew with the increase of the light, so that even before the disk of the sun had risen completely above the hills the Nile offered the appearance

¹ Creuzer, *Symbolik*, p. 89.

of a river of blood. Suspecting some illusion I rose quickly, and leaning over the side of the boat, found my first impression confirmed. The entire mass of the waters was opaque, and of a dark red, more like blood than anything else to which I could compare it. At the same time, I saw that the river had risen some inches during the night, and the Arabs came to tell me it was *the Red Nile*."¹ It is fatal, however, to the belief that such a familiar phenomenon explains the wonder of Exodus, since "the water is never more healthy, more delicious or more refreshing," than when thus discoloured.²

The phenomenon has been traced by Ehrenberg to the presence and inconceivably rapid growth of infusoria and minute cryptogamous plants of a red colour.³ Many cases of such appearances are recorded. Ehrenberg himself, in 1823, saw the whole bay of the Red Sea, at Sinai, turned into the colour of blood by the presence of such plants.⁴ Similarly, the Elbe ran with what seemed blood, for several days, in the beginning of this century. The Nile, also, has been known to have the same look, and to remain blood-like and fetid for months. In *Silliman's Journal* there is an account of a fountain of blood in a cave in South America. It grew solid and burst bottles in which it was put, and dogs ate it greedily. Before the potato rot in 1846 small red spots appeared on linen laid out to bleach, and in 1848, Eckhardt, of Berlin, saw the same on potatoes, in the house of a cholera patient; the spots in this last case proving to

¹ Osburn's *Monumental History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 10.

² Rosenmüller, *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, has varied information on this subject, vol. i. p. 276.

³ Cryptogamous plants are those in which the fructification is concealed. Such as ferns, mosses, lichens, algæ, and fungi, or mushrooms.

⁴ Lengerke's *Kanaan*, p. 406.

be caused by one of the algæ—*Palmella prodigiosa*. In 1852 a similar appearance on food, both animal and vegetable, was noticed in France, by M. Montague. In 1825, Lake Morat became like blood in different parts. In the steppes of Siberia, also, lakes have been noticed thus strangely discoloured. In the time of the Reformation, M. Merle d'Aubigné tells us, blood seemed in some parts of Switzerland to flow from the earth, from walls, and other sources, and the same thing has been noticed on bread, at Tours, in A.D. 503; at Spire, in 1103; at Rochelle, in 1163; at Namur, in 1193; and elsewhere at various times. The cause of these wonders is a minute alga which grows so rapidly that it actually flows, and is so small that there are from 46,656,000,000,000, to 884,736,000,000,000 plants in a cubic inch.¹

We are told that this appalling visitation was inflicted at the moment of Pharaoh's going to the river;² apparently at the head of a religious procession; on the formal visit usually made each day at sunrise, when the inundation was beginning; to note the height of the waters, and to pay religious homage to the river.³ The daily increase of the river was carefully registered under the personal superintendence of the king, who announced the god to be worshipped that day: for a different god presided over every new phase of the waters. But not only was the Nile affected: the miracle showed itself also, at once, in all its branches; in the "rivers," or rather canals, which covered the whole land with

¹ *Macmillan*. Infusoria, fungi, and volcanic dust are, also, perhaps, occasional causes.

² Exod. vii. 15.

³ Irwin saw a troop of maidens go out, at midnight, dancing and singing, to the banks of the Nile, then beginning to rise. After bathing in the holy waters, they sang the praises of the stream. Irwin's *Incidents, etc.*, p. 229.

a network of broad streams or silver threads; in the "ponds," including the few natural springs, and all the cisterns and tanks of the towns and villages; and in all the "pools," or reservoirs, some of which were of enormous extent.¹ Nor did even the water in the stone or wooden jars of households, escape. To add to all, a great mortality followed among the fish of the river—on which the population largely depended for food.

Yet, though thus broadly stated, it is clear that some of the water must have been left unchanged, for we read that the magicians did the same by their "enchantments;" which would have been impossible if there had been no water left for them to manipulate. Marcos, the leader of a heretical sect in the ancient Church, seems to have had the knowledge of chemical secrets on which the Egyptian priests, also, may have acted. Having filled wine cups of transparent glass with colourless wine, he began to pray, and the fluid, as he did so, became in one of the cups *blood-red*, in another, purple, and in a third, an azure blue.²

That the Almighty could, if he chose, turn water into blood as easily as His divine Son turned it into wine, can be questioned by no one, but it deserves notice that equally exact language is used elsewhere in Scripture when only a similarity in appearance is meant. Thus it is said in Joel³ that "the moon shall be turned into blood." It is striking, moreover, that in the announce-

¹ The words used prove the sacred writer's intimate knowledge of Egypt, for they include all the water sources of the land; the arms of the Nile, the canals of irrigation, the ponds left by the Nile, and the artificial reservoirs. *Hengstenberg*. See also *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 277. *Dillmann*, p. 71.

² Epiphan., *Contra Hæres.*, vol. i. p. 24.

³ Chap. iii. 4. Acts ii. 20.

ment of the threatened infliction, it is not said that the Egyptians would be quite unable to drink the water, but that they "should weary themselves"¹ in their efforts to do so, and be forced to dig "round about the river" for supplies. That they obtained enough by this means is certain, else all the population would have died; but the mere filtration of the river water through the soil would not have made it drinkable had it been changed into actual blood. Moreover, in the climate of Egypt, the smell of corrupting blood would have killed every living creature, both man and beast, long before the seven days had ended.

The Second Plague, of frogs, like all the others, directly assailed Egyptian idolatry, for Heki—"the driver away of frogs"—a female deity, had the head of a frog, as also had the god Ptah, worshipped in southern Egypt, as the wife of Khaoum, the god of the cataracts of the Nile.² The frog, moreover, as a symbol of renewed life after death, was connected with the most ancient forms of nature worship in the country at large.³ It was embalmed and honoured with burial at Thebes. When the Nile and its canals are full, in the height of the inundation, the abounding moisture quickens inconceivable myriads of frogs and toads, which swarm everywhere even in ordinary years, and now did so to an extent never before known. But Hepi was so utterly powerless to deliver her worshippers from them, that even the houses and the very kneading troughs were polluted by their presence; a trouble very

¹ Exod. vii. 18. *Knobel*.

² Brugsch, *Geog.*, p. 224. *Hier. Wörterbuch*, p. 478. *Grammaire Hier.*, p. 105. Plutarch says that the frog was an emblem of the sun.

³ Dümichen, *Ægypt. Zeitschrift*, 1869, p. 6.

serious to a people so ceremonially strict in their ideas of purity. The magicians, with their muttered spells, could only add to the evil by appearing to bring up more frogs from the marshes; when the land had to be cleared of them, Pharaoh needed to ask the aid of Moses and Aaron.¹ That he sought their help was the first sign of his yielding; but his relenting humour soon passed away.

The Third Plague was not preceded by any such warning as had been given before the two former. The soil of Egypt was as sacred as everything else in the valley of the Nile, for it was worshipped as Seb—the father of the gods.² But now it was to be defiled, by its very dust seeming to turn into noisome pests. At the stroke of Aaron's rod "there arose gnats on man and beast," or as our version renders it, "lice." In this instance, also, the natural phenomena of the season were utilized, as far as they went, to carry out the judgment. "When the inundation has risen," says Osburn, "above the level of the canals and channels and is rapidly flowing over the entire surface, the fine dust or powder into which the mud of last year's overflow is triturated, and with which the fields are entirely covered, presents a very extraordinary phenomenon. Immediately on its being moistened with the waters, gnats and flies innumerable burst from their pupæ, and spring into perfect existence. The eggs that produce them were laid in the retiring waters of the former flood. They have matured

¹ The words of Moses, "glory over me, etc." (Exod. viii. 9), are equal to "Thine be the honour to appoint the time when I shall entreat for thee and thy servants, etc." He would show that he could remove the plague at any time on Pharaoh's yielding. "Have this honour over me, of saying when I shall, etc."

² Brugsch, *Zeitschrift*, 1868, p. 123.

in the interval, and vivify instantaneously on the dust absorbing moisture enough to discolour it. As the flood advances slowly onwards, a black line of living insects on its extreme verge moves with it. The sight of them, and of the birds and fishes that prey on them, is a very singular one."¹ The word used in Exodus² apparently includes various poisonous flies and insects. Origen traces the plague to swarms of mosquitoes.³ The Greek Bible, translated by Jews, who, like Origen, lived in Egypt, uses a word⁴ which includes not only harmless insects, but winged pests, which were fatal even to horses and cattle.⁵ Brugsch thinks the word used in the Hebrew Bible⁶ the same as the Egyptian word for the mosquito, and says that it has still this meaning in the Coptic, which is the representative of the Ancient Egyptian language. Sir Samuel Baker, however, speaks of a plague of vermin in Africa in terms so like those of the English version as to suggest that mosquitoes were not the only form of the visitation. There is a kind of tick, he tells us, which lives in hot sand and dust, and is "the greatest enemy to man and beast. From the size of a grain of sand, in its natural state, it swells to the size of a hazel nut after having preyed for some days upon the blood of an animal." "At one place it seemed," he says, "as though the very dust were turned into lice."⁷ Dr. Tristram,⁸ thinks mosquitoes cannot be meant, as

¹ Osburn, *Israel in Egypt*, p. 265.

² Exod. viii. 13, 17.

³ *Homil. IV. in Exod.* Migne, *Patrol. Gr.*, xii. 322.

⁴ Skniphēs. The insects that destroyed the horses of Sapor's army at the siege of Nisibis are thus named. *Theodoret, H. E.*, ii. 30.

⁵ Knobel, *Exod.*, p. 71. *Liddell and Scott: Knips.* Dillmann, p. 78.

⁶ Kinnim.

⁷ Baker's *Nile Tributaries*, p. 84.

⁸ *Nat. History of the Bible*, p. 304.

they rise from the waters, not from the dust, and he supposes lice are intended; but Baker remarks that "lice" would shrivel at once in the hot dust of Africa, and therefore contends for the terrible ticks he names. To a scrupulously clean people like the Egyptians, and especially to their priests, "lice" or "ticks" would be a terrible visitation; while the inability of the magicians to remove the pest, if it were that of mosquitoes, was a direct confession of impotence on the part of the gods to whom was entrusted the preservation of the country from such visitations. "Fly-gods" were characteristic of all hot countries, in antiquity—as, for example, Zeus Apomyius, "the driver away of flies," who was worshipped at Olympia, in Greece; Myiagros, "the protector against flies," invoked at the festival of Athena. Apollo Parnopius was the averter of locusts; the god Acchor the "protector from flies" at Cyrene. It was believed that no flies or dogs would approach the temple of Hercules Myiagros at Rome;¹ and at Ekron, in the Philistine country, the god Beelzebub—"the Lord of Flies"—was the recognized guardian of the land from insect plagues. All that could be pretended was that the evil gods of their land were fighting against the good; that it was the work of Set, the Sutekh or Typhon of later mythology—the Egyptian Satan.

The Fourth Plague was another visitation of insects, of a different kind, but equally terrible. The Hebrew word used,² appears to include winged pests of all kinds,³ as

¹ *Dict. of Mythol.* Winer. Sepp's *Leben Christi*. Döllinger's *Gentile and Jew*; Kitto's *Cyclo.*, art. *Beelzebub*. Millington's *Plagues of Egypt*, p. 96.

² Arob.

³ So the Jewish expositors understand it, and also Aquila and Jerome.

might be expected in a country in which, as in Egypt, flies swarm in clouds of which inhabitants of Northern countries have no idea. Their countless myriads fill the air in October and November, after the season of frogs is over. One eats them, drinks them, and breathes them.¹ The cockroach, cricket, and beetles generally seem also implied in the Hebrew word,² and, if this be so, the most sacred symbol of the Egyptian religion, the scarabæus³ or common dung beetle of the country, must have been part of the plague. This insect was believed to be of no sex, but to be produced directly from the balls of ox dung in which it lays its eggs, and which it afterwards buries in the ground; and hence, as the Egyptians did not suspect the presence of these eggs, it was chosen as the emblem of the creative principle. Other fanciful analogies made it be regarded also as the emblem of the sun, which was at times symbolized by an idol with the form or head of a scarabæus;—of consecration to the gods; and of the abiding life of the soul, notwithstanding any change of body in future stages of its existence. It was sculptured on every monument, painted on every tomb, and on every mummy chest, engraved on gems, worn round the neck as an amulet, and honoured in ten thousand images of every size and of all materials.⁴ That it, among other insects, should be multiplied into a plague, was a blow at idolatry that would

¹ Wood's *Bible Animals*, p. 633.

² Rosenmüller, *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 286. Gesenius, 9th edit., p. 661.

³ Prof. Drake, in *Smith's Bible Dict.*, translates "swarms of flies," by "swarms of beetles;" so Kalisch and others. Hug, quoted by Winer, thinks that the fly under the form of which Beelzebub was represented, was the scarabæus.

⁴ Creuzer's *Symbolik*, p. 162. There was a god—Cheperu—with the head of a beetle.

come home to all. But stinging flies were added to the visitation: vast swarms of them, perhaps, being blown northwards to Lower Egypt, from the great marshes of the Upper Nile, by the south wind, as sometimes happens still.¹ Among these the cattle fly, which is far worse in its bite than the mosquito, is perhaps especially meant. Coming in immense clouds, it covers all objects with its black and loathsome masses, and causes severe inflammation by its bites. Indeed, in Abyssinia it is still so much dreaded, that at its approach in the rainy season, the inhabitants move off with their herds; man and beast being alike unable to endure them.²

But the trouble caused in Egypt even by the common fly is almost indescribable. When the country is mostly under water, during the height of the inundation, they increase to a fearful extent. No curtains, or other precautions can exclude them. Their food being diminished by the great amount of land under water, they seem literally mad with hunger, and light in countless numbers upon whatever promises to satisfy it. Every drinking vessel is filled with them, and they cover every article of food in a moment.³ If, however, it be thus in some years even now, what must it have been when they came in such millions, that Egypt seemed turned into a region as much to be loathed as it was formerly loved.⁴

The Fifth Plague touched the honour of the Egyptian religion in one of its tenderest points—the worship of Isis and Osiris, to whom the cow and the ox were sacred, and of the great god Amon, of whom the ram was the living symbol. The sacred cow, the ox Apis and the

¹ Fliegen, in Schenkel's *Lex.*, and in *Riehm*.

² One is reminded of the tsetse fly of the Zambesi.

³ Osburn, *Israel in Egypt*, p. 269.

⁴ Exod. viii. 24. "The land was corrupted, etc."

calf Mnevis, were in fact their greatest deities. It is the custom to strew the surface of the inundation waters with seed of lentils, vetches, and other plants,¹ and trample them into the soil to prevent their being washed away, by driving cattle of all kinds, back and forward, through the soft mud. In this process, however, the herds suffer so greatly that numbers of sick beasts, tended by skilful herdsmen, are represented in almost all the pictures of it in the tombs.² Perhaps this common passage in Egyptian agricultural life was the starting point of the terrible calamity now sent on the land. It may have been, however, at the close of the inundation, when the water is very foul; for murrain has been noticed to occur at that season.³ In any case, a wide mortality broke out suddenly, not only among the sheep and oxen, but even among the camels, horses, and asses, and threatened to destroy them utterly.⁴ Murrain is even yet not uncommon in Egypt, and sometimes is very fatal. Thus, in 1842 the rinderpest swept off great part of the cattle of all kinds,⁵ and in 1786 they were almost exterminated by a similar disease.⁶ But the plague brought on them by Aaron could not be confounded with such natural

¹ Eccles. xi. 1.

² Osburn, *Israel in Egypt*, p. 272.

³ Knobel, *Exodus*, p. 77. It breaks out almost yearly after the subsidence of the inundation. Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 1st ser. p. 39. Dillmann, p. 83.

⁴ Exod. ix. 6, says "all the cattle of Egypt died," but in verse 19, and in chap. xi. 5, it is seen that this is not to be understood as it reads. The poverty of the Hebrew language is, in fact, the cause, in this and many other cases, of universality being stated when it is not really designed. There were no words to express limitations.

⁵ Lepsius' *Briefe aus Egypten*, p. 14.

⁶ In 1863 the murrain began in November and was at its height in December. This is its usual time. *Speaker's Comment*.

visitations, for, like that of the flies, it was limited to the strictly Egyptian districts, and did not enter Goshen, while it also came and ceased with equal suddenness at the word of Moses.

In the Sixth Plague the hand of God pressed still more heavily on the Egyptians, for now they themselves were smitten. Nor was the lesson taught by the new visitation less striking than the others in its religious aspect. Handfuls of ashes from the "furnaces," it may be the smelting furnaces for iron,¹—the special emblems in Scripture of the bitter slavery of the Hebrews—were sprinkled towards heaven in the sight of Pharaoh; an act familiar to those who may have seen it done, though the import could not for the moment be realized. In various Egyptian towns sacred to Set or Typhon, the god of Evil—Heliopolis and Busiris, in the Delta, among them—red haired and light complexioned men, and as such, foreigners, perhaps often Hebrews,² were yearly offered in sacrifice to this hideous idol. After being burnt alive on a high altar, their ashes were scattered in the air by the priests, in the belief that they would avert evil from all parts whither they were blown.³ But, now,

¹ The image of a furnace for smelting iron is often used in this connection. Thus, "I have brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt." Deut. iv. 20. "I have brought them forth from Egypt, from the iron furnace." Jer. xi. 4. "I have chosen thee out of the furnace of affliction." Is. xlviii. 10. "Out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron." 1 Kings viii. 51.

² Thus David was "ruddy." 1 Sam. xvi. 12; xvii. 42. "My beloved," says Canticles, "is white and ruddy," i.e. "dazzling white and red." Delitzsch, *Das Hohelied*, v. 10.

³ "In India, when magicians pronounce an imprecation on an individual, a village, or a country, they take the ashes of cow dung from a common fire, and throw them into the air, saying to the objects of their displeasure, such a sickness, or such a curse shall surely come on you." Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations*.

the ashes thrown into the air by Moses, instead of carrying blessing with them, fell everywhere in a rain of blains and boils on the people, and even on the cattle which the murrain had spared. Grievous to every class, this plague, which some have thought the leprosy,¹ must have fallen with special severity on the priests, by rendering them unclean and thus incapacitating them for their duties. No attempt could be made to imitate such a judgment. The "interpreters of secret signs" could not even stand before Moses.

Six plagues had now failed to make Pharaoh own defeat and grant the Hebrews permission to leave the country. To lose a whole nation of slaves was hardly worse than to admit that the gods of the land had been humbled by Jehovah. A Seventh Plague was therefore sent. It was now about the month of March, for the barley was in ear and the flax in blossom, but wheat, rye and spelt were yet only green.² A terrible storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied by hail, presently devastated all the land except Goshen, which it did not affect. Such a phenomenon was unheard of, for though thunder and hail are not unknown in Egypt in spring, they are

¹ It is perhaps in vague reference to this that Tacitus says, "Many authors agree that a plague which made the body hideous having broken out in Egypt, the king Bocchoris, on the counsel of the oracle of Ammon, from which he had asked what he should do, was ordered to purge the kingdom of those thus afflicted, and to send them away to other countries, as hateful to the gods." *Hist.*, v. 3. Contagious diseases are said in an old Egyptian document to have been frequent in December. *Pap. Sall.*, iv.

² Exod. ix. 31, 32. Barley and flax are generally ripe in Egypt in March; wheat and spelt in April. In Palestine, except the Jordan valley, these crops are from a month to six weeks later. The flax crops were very important, from the wide use of linen in Egypt, for priests and others.

rarely severe. Wittman, indeed, encountered a great thunder storm with lightning, in November, and Lepsius notices another in December, accompanied with hail,¹ but even these were very unusual occurrences. How must it have shocked a nation so devout towards its gods, to find that the waters, the earth and the air, the growth of the fields, the cattle, and even their own persons, all under the care of a host of divinities, were yet, in succession, smitten by a power against which these protectors were impotent! But the lesson was sinking into the hearts of the Hebrews, if not of the Egyptians, that "the earth is Jehovah's," and that idols were vanity.

The Eighth Plague took the dreaded form of a miraculous visitation of locusts, than which nothing more terrible could follow the devastation of the hail.² The invasions of these insects are one of the heaviest calamities to the regions they afflict. In the Old World, the vast sweep from the Cape of Good Hope to Norway, and from China to the West Coast of Africa; but especially from Arabia to India, and from the Nile and the Red Sea to Greece and the North of Asia Minor, is exposed to their ravages. Their legions have been known to cross the Black Sea and alight on the fields of Poland, and to pass over the Mediterranean and fall on the green plains of Lombardy. Always advancing in a straight line and leaving behind them the countless germs of future swarms, they devour everything green that comes

¹ Knobel's *Exodus* p. 81. One at Benihassan, in February, "of extreme severity," is mentioned in the *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 285. Dillmann's *Exodus*, p. 87.

² Locusts seem to visit Egypt, when they do come, from March to May. The Egyptians were passionately fond of trees. There are many notices of the importation of foreign ones, to beautify the land.

in their way. Their numbers exceed computation: the Hebrews called them "the countless," and the Arabs know them as "the darkeners of the sun." Unable to guide their own flight, though capable of crossing large spaces, they are at the mercy of the wind, which bears them as blind instruments of Providence,¹ to the doomed region given over to them for the time. Innumerable as the drops of water or the sands of the sea shore, their flight obscures the sun and casts a thick shadow on the earth. It seems, indeed, as if a great aerial mountain, many miles in breadth, were advancing with a slow unresting progress. Woe to the countries beneath them, if the wind fall and let them alight. They descend unnumbered as flakes of snow, and hide the ground. It may be "like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them it is a desolate wilderness. At their approach the peoples are in anguish; all faces lose their colour."² No walls can stop them: no ditches arrest them: fires kindled in their path are forthwith extinguished by the myriads of their dead, and the countless armies march on. If a door or a window be open, they enter and destroy everything of wood in the house. Every terrace, court, and inner chamber is filled with them in a moment. Such an awful invasion now swept over Egypt, consuming before it everything green, and stripping the trees, till the land was bared of all signs of vegetation. A strong north-west wind from the Mediterranean swept the locusts into the Red Sea.³

¹ "The pest of the anger of the gods" is the name Pliny gives them. *Hist. Nat.*, ii. 35. ² Joel ii. 6 (literally translated).

³ The removal of locusts is generally brought about by the wind. "Being carried off by the wind," says Pliny, "they fall into seas or lakes." *Hist. Nat.*, xi. 35. The putrefaction of the masses of locusts thus drowned sometimes causes a pestilence.

Once more, for the moment, Pharaoh was humbled. Summoning Moses and Aaron in haste, he implored them that he might be forgiven his sin against Jehovah, only this time; and the mercy asked was granted. But even this visitation failed to influence him long. It is, after all, only a natural event, whispered the priests, and so, Israel was still kept in bonds. There had indeed been a show of concession before the locusts came, but Moses had justly refused it. The men might go, by themselves, Pharaoh had said, to hold a religious feast to Jehovah, but the rest must stay. "Jehovah will certainly be with you," he had added with a sneer, "when I let you and your little ones go together! You intend evil. The men may go and serve Jehovah: you wanted that"—and he drove Moses and Aaron out of his presence.¹ But now that a plague so awful had come, he was willing that only the flocks and herds should be left behind, as a pledge for the return of the Hebrews. He had, however, refused the first request for only three days' journey away from Egypt,² to a spot where sacrifices of creatures sacred among the Egyptians could be offered without kindling war; and now the demand was indefinitely increased—even the cattle, to the last hoof, must go with them. Nor was anything more said of a merely temporary journey.³ Meanwhile, before it had come to this, the Ninth Plague fell upon the land. The

¹ Exod. x. 9-11.

² The Egyptians seem to have had religious pilgrimages to points outside their own country. There are still stone monuments with inscriptions by the Pharaohs, at Surabit el Khadim, which seem to mark it as a place to which such pilgrimages were made. The request of Moses would not, therefore, be anything strange. Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. i. p. 128. Lengerke's *Kanaan*, p. 403.

³ Exod. x. 9-11, 24.

sun was the supreme god of Egypt, and he, too, was at last, to veil himself before Jehovah. From whatever cause, natural or miraculous, an intense darkness was brought over all Egypt, except Goshen, for three days, during which men could not see each other, and all movement was stopped. A physical phenomenon, frequent in Egypt, though of less intensity, may possibly illustrate the agency divinely used to produce this result. A hot wind, known as the Chamsin, blows from the equator, in Africa, towards the north, in April or between March and May. The name means "fifty," from the Chamsin prevailing intermittently for sometimes two, three, or four days together, during that number of days, with a calm between the storms, of it may be a month. In the desert it raises vast whirlwinds of sand, which sometimes bury entire caravans. Indeed, they once overwhelmed the whole army of Cambyses, sent against Amon, so completely, that it disappeared as if swallowed up by the waves of the sea.¹ It is always attended with a thickness of the air, through which the sun sheds only at best a dim yellow light; even this passing in many cases into complete darkness. On these occasions the people in the towns and villages shut themselves up in their houses, in the innermost apartments, or in underground cellars, if there be any, and those in the desert dig holes in the earth, or hide themselves in caves or pits, and await the end of the storm. Artificial light at such times is of little use, for it cannot pierce the opaque air. The streets are perfectly empty, and a deep silence, like that of night, reigns everywhere. An Arab chronicler, about the end of the eleventh century, records a great storm accompanied by darkness so intense that it was thought the

¹ *Herod.*, iii. 26. *Kalisch, Exod.*, p. 129.

end of the world was at hand.¹ Startled by the awful intensity of the darkness in the present case, Pharaoh once more seemed about to yield. But the demand of Moses, that the Hebrews should take with them the whole of their flocks and herds, again roused his stubbornness, and the interview ended amidst angry threats of the king that the audacious intruder on his peace should die if he came to him again. His cup, however, was nearly full, and Moses, knowing the future, could repeat the words with an awful significance—that he would indeed see his face no more.² The Exodus was at hand.

¹ Rosenmüller's *Alterthumskunde*, vol. iii. p. 220. Denon's *Travels*, vol. i. p. 285. The words "darkness that may be felt," in our version, are translated by Kalisch, "so that they may grope in darkness." Zunz translates them: "The darkness will continue." Hirsch and De Wette agree with our version.

² The "rage and fury" of Nebuchadnezzar at the thwarting of his least whim (Dan. iii. 13), may help us to picture the interview between Moses and Menephtah. Exod. ix. 34 explains what is said elsewhere of God hardening the heart of Pharaoh, for it distinctly tells us that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. See *Studien und Kritiken*, 1844, p. 464.

Addition to Note 2, p. 121.—Calvin, Rosenmüller, Hengstenberg, and others justly hold that when the patriarchs are said (Exod. vi. 3) not to have known God by the name Jehovah, the meaning is that, though the word itself was familiar to them, its depth and grandeur of significance had not as yet been disclosed. They knew Him as El Shaddai—the omnipotent, unchangeable, eternal, and faithful; but it only needs the remembrance of the infinitely fuller disclosure of His attributes, nature, and relations to man, granted to Israel, in connection with the name Jehovah, to see that He had, in the patriarchal ages, been, as yet, comparatively unrevealed.



CHAPTER VI.

THE TENTH PLAGUE AND THE EXODUS.

NO great national crisis is of sudden growth. More than a generation had passed since Moses, in a sudden heat of irrepressible indignation, had smitten down the Egyptian overseer for his cruelty to a Hebrew; a first outbreak against the enslavement of his people which he, in all likelihood, hoped would prove the signal for their general uprising, to strike for freedom under his leadership. In his secret thoughts he had doubtless long dreamed of their possible emancipation, and it might well seem that, now he had committed himself to them, they might rally round him, and break away, as free men, into the desert which was so near. But the iron had entered into their souls, and his daring patriotism, far from finding support, seemed likely to end only in his death, through the evidence given by Hebrews themselves against him. From that time, in the depths of Midian, the one thought had still engrossed him. But he had had to endure the pain of hope deferred for many years, while, in his absence, Aaron was gradually educating his brethren, through their tribal organization, to higher thoughts, and to a sense of religious and national unity, in opposition to the Egyptians. At last the time seemed ripe, and Aaron, divinely prompted, could go to

Midian, to commune with his brother, and prepare for the future.

But the religious development of the Hebrew community was still imperfect, for centuries of residence among the idols of Egypt, and of the Asiatic tribes of the Delta, had sadly lowered the spiritual sensibilities of most, and had created almost imperceptibly a leaning towards the corrupt worship around them. It was necessary, therefore, before they broke away from the Nile Valley, that they should be constituted, formally, a distinct community, chosen by Jehovah for Himself, and recognizing Him only as their God. To secure their adoption of a divinity almost new to them—for they had well nigh forgotten the faith of their patriarch forefathers—it was imperative that they should feel His supreme greatness as contrasted with the false gods they were required to abandon for His sake; and this the successive plagues effected. Egyptian idolatry had been utterly dishonoured and discredited by Him whom they were henceforth, alone, to worship. To this great Being, moreover, they were permitted to look, henceforth, as their Protector and Heavenly King, and as the God of their fathers. To be His “first-born sons”¹ by this separation to His service, was to be impressed on them as their greatest glory, and the imperishable pledge of their future.

One act more remained of the sublime drama, by which these mighty revelations should be brought home to the hearts of all Israel. The Pharaoh, still obdurate, was to be humbled to the dust by a judgment so terrible that he would gladly resign the contest with Jehovah, and let the race whom so awful a Power thus championed, “go, altogether”; thankful to be rid of them, and even

¹ Exod. iv. 22.

“thrusting them out”¹ from the Nile Valley. But, thus to abase the Pharaoh was to degrade the national idolatry in his person—for he was, himself, the incarnation of the great sun-god Ra.

It was necessary, however, that the Hebrews should be prepared for their sudden departure, and for entering on a tent-life in the desert, like that of their forefathers. Their training in the arts and occupations of Egypt secured them the elements of a higher civilization than that of mere shepherds, and fitted them for their destined part as a settled community in Palestine. But their humble position, as a whole, in Goshen and throughout Egypt, especially for the long period of their slavery, left them unprovided with adequate means for their religious or social wants as a community. While some may have gained wealth, the multitude must have been very poor, for the Egyptians, for generations, had forced them to labour for them without wages. They were now about to set out on a great religious pilgrimage to Sinai, a holy region to the tribes around, related to them, and then to enter on an independent life as a nation; and this demanded, among much else, due provision of robes, ornaments and vessels, for religious festivities. They and the bulk of the Egyptian people had lived on friendly terms, for the native population, like the poor Mussulmans in Turkey, were hardly less oppressed than the Hebrews themselves. Even among the wealthy, moreover, who had supported the tyranny of the Pharaohs, and in the court itself, the events of the last months had made all feel the necessity of deprecating further plagues from God. When, therefore, the word went forth from Moses to Israel, to ask² from all

¹ Exod. xi. 1.

² Not to borrow. Exod. iii. 22; xi. 2. The Hebrew word

around them, likely to have such things, the dresses, and ornaments, and vessels which the wilderness could not yield, the appeal was widely successful.

And now, as the first step towards an independent national organization under Jehovah, their invisible king; as the formal inauguration of His worship as the national God, and in recognition of their emancipation being due to Him alone, a sacrificial feast—the Pass-over—was instituted. But, first of all, the date from which their year began was changed; for it was fitting that the deliverance of the nation should open a new era. It was the time of the earing of the wheat—almost our April—and, henceforth, the month, known from this, as Abib—the “earing”—should be the first of the ecclesiastical year. Hitherto they had contented themselves with the Egyptian calendar, which began about the time of the summer solstice,² when the Nile was rising, and harvest is over in Palestine.³ From this time, however, all connection with Egypt was to be broken off, and the commencement of the sacred year was to commemorate the time when Jehovah led them forth to liberty and independence.

It would seem as if the Hebrews, like other ancient races, had held yearly festivals at the different seasons, even while in Egypt. Spring, when the green ears shoot out, was in all nations of antiquity marked by simply means “to make a request.” The wealth so obtained was doubtless regarded by the Hebrews as only a just return for long service and cruel wrongs. Knobel and Kalisch both reject the idea of “lending.” In India, even the poorest are seen at religious festivals well adorned with jewels which they have borrowed for the occasion from their richer neighbours. *Roberts.*

¹ Exod. xii. 35.

² Lepsius, *Chron. der Ägypter*, vol. i. p. 148.

³ Lev. xxiii. 16.

religious festivities, the great characteristic of which, however differently expressed, was a desire to avert evil from the community by propitiating the higher powers. It was doubtless on the existence of such a custom among his own people that Moses based his demand, so many times repeated, that they should be allowed to go outside Egypt, to hold a great sacred feast, with their national rites.¹ Availing himself of this established usage, he, at the same time changed it, from a mere vague expression of religious feeling, to a distinctly historical and theocratic institution. Israel was henceforth to base its religion on the assurance that it was the Chosen people of Jehovah, standing in a special relation to Him, as a royal and priestly race: the great deliverance from Egypt by which He separated them to Himself, consecrating them as such. The old feast of spring was therefore, from this time, changed to a yearly celebration of a unique and transcendent event. On the tenth day of Abib each head of a family was to set apart a kid or a lamb; which must be a male, without blemish, in its first year. If a household were too small to consume the whole,² members of another were to join. Four days later, in the minutes between the sunset and the appearance of the stars, the whole "congregation" were to kill the victims thus selected; each family sprinkling its blood on their doorposts and lintels, as the parts most readily seen, and holding the feast in their own dwelling. The lamb or kid was to be roasted entire,

¹ Exod. v. 1, 3, 17; vii. 16; viii. 1, 20, 25 ff.; ix. 1, 13; x. 9. The name of the month, Abib, is given in chap. xiii. 4. It was called Nisan by the later Hebrews—from the Assyrian Nisannu. The early Syrians called it Nisan. De Vogüé, *Syrie Centrale*, p. 5.

² The later Targums say, that ten were required at each Pass-over circle.

with head, legs, and entrails—of course after being cleansed—the bones unbroken; and any part of it left was to be burned next morning. The directions for the meal were also striking. They were to stand, their sandals on their feet, their staff in their hands, their girdle bound round them, as in preparation for a journey, and they were to eat “in haste.” No one was to leave the house that night. No foreigner could join in the festival, and the flesh must not be carried outside the house. Every care was to be taken that no part of it should be applied to profane uses, or shared by any but the chosen people. “It was holy to Jehovah,” and a memorial of His relations with Israel alone.

The Hebrew population were, meanwhile, to be ready at a moment's notice, to set out on their flight for liberty, when summoned, before morning, to do so.¹ The awful significance of the blood sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of their houses was moreover impressed on them by the announcement, that God was to pass through the land of Egypt that night, to smite all the firstborn, both of man and beast, and thus to execute judgment against all the gods of the land;² but would pass over every house on which the blood was seen, leaving its inmates unharmed.³

Every detail, indeed, was significant. The sprinkled blood marked the rite as a sacrifice, for it redeemed them from the death let loose on Egypt.⁴ As that of a sinless

¹ Exod. xii. 30.

² Exod. xii. 12. This doubtless implies that the sacred animals were smitten. In every temple the god lay dead.

³ Exod. xii. 23.

⁴ It is a curious illustration of the vitality of religious rites, that the Mahomedans even to this day, at the great feast of Bairam, yearly, sacrifice sheep and sprinkle the blood on the door-posts of their houses. Strauss, *Sinai and Golgotha*, p. 63.

victim, the household might, as it were, hide behind it and escape the just punishment of their sins.¹ That the lamb was given them as a feast was, moreover, a sign of Jehovah's favour, and brought Him, as it were, to be their guest. There being as yet no common sanctuary, each house had its own sacrifice; in the absence of a public altar to Jehovah, the blood was to be sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels; no priests having as yet been consecrated, these duties were fulfilled by each household father.

Coupled with this, a second feast² was to be observed—that of unleavened bread, with the same object of keeping permanently alive the remembrance of their being “thrust out from Egypt,” so suddenly, that they had to take with them “their dough before it was leavened, and bind up their kneading troughs in their clothes upon their shoulders.”³ The Passover lamb was eaten with such unleavened bread, to remind them of this, and with bitter herbs as a memento of the affliction they had undergone; and only unleavened bread was to be used for seven days after the Passover, to impress on them that for many days after their escape from Pharaoh, the hot haste of flight left no time to prepare any other kind. Nor was the yearly recurrence of these festivals thought enough to stamp on the heart of the nation, age after age, the memory of its wondrous birth. The firstborn of man and beast were demanded for Jehovah, to be bought back only by a ransom, in impressive acknowledgment that when the firstborn of Egypt perished, that

¹ Köhler, vol. i. p. 195.

² The word for feast is Haj—the word for a religious pilgrimage among the Mahomedans now.

³ Exod. xii. 34.

of Israel, though spared, had been justly exposed to the same doom, but for the propitiating sacrifice.¹

¹ The characteristics of the original observance of the Passover may in some measure be preserved in the rites with which it is kept by the Modern Samaritans. The following is the account of these given by the Rev. John Mills in his *Modern Samaritans*, pp. 250-256:—

“The tents, ten in number, were arranged in a kind of circle, to face the highest point of the mountain, where rose their ancient temple, now lying in ruins. Within a radius of a few hundred yards from the place where I stood, clustered all the spots which make Gerizim to them the most sacred mountain, the house of God. Under my feet was the ruined wall of their famous temple; a little on my left, to the south, were the seven steps of Adam out of Paradise; still a little further southward was the place of the offering of Isaac; close by it, westward, was the rock of the Holy Place; and just by the wall on which I stood, northwestward, were the celebrated Joshua stones. A few hundred yards westward was their encampment, in front of which was the platform for the celebration of their holy feast.

“About half-past ten, the officials kindled the fire to roast the lambs. For this purpose, a circular pit had been sunk in the earth, about six feet deep and three feet in diameter, and built round with loose stones. In this a fire, made of dry heather, and briars, etc., was kindled, the minister of the synagogue meanwhile standing on a large stone, and offering up a prayer suited for the occasion. Another fire was then kindled in a kind of sunken trough, close to the platform where the service was to be performed. Over this, two cauldrons full of water were placed, and a short prayer offered. We then returned to the priest's tent, for a short time, to regale ourselves with lemonade, till, about half an hour before midday, the whole male population assembled to commence the regular service. There were forty-eight adults, besides women and children; the women and the little ones remaining in the tents. The congregation were in their ordinary dress, with the exception of the two officers, and two or three of the elders, who were dressed in their white robes, as in the synagogue. A carpet was laid on the ground, near the boiling cauldrons, where Yacub, the minister of the synagogue,

The curse now broke over the doomed land. "It came to pass, that, at midnight, Jehovah smote all the firstborn

stood, on the stone, with his face to the people, and chanted the service, assisted by some of the elders—all turning their faces towards the site of the temple. Six lambs driven by five young men, dressed in blue cotton, their loins girded, now made their appearance. At midday, the service had reached the place where the account of the Paschal sacrifice is introduced; 'And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening' (Exod. xii. 6); when in an instant, the lambs, one after another, were thrown on their backs by the blue-clad young men, and in a moment lay dying under the flashing knife of one of their number. The young men now dipped their fingers in the blood, and marked a spot on the foreheads and noses of the children and some of the females; but on none of the male adults. The whole male congregation then came up close to the reader; embracing and kissing one another, because the lambs of their redemption had been slain. Next came the fleecing—not skinning—while the service still continued. It was done by pouring boiling water from the cauldrons, the effect of which was to *scald* off the wool so that it could be easily removed. Each lamb was then lifted up, with its head downwards, to drain off the remaining blood. The right fore legs, which belonged to the priest, were next removed, and, together with the entrails and some salt, placed on the wood, already laid, and then burnt; but the liver was carefully replaced. The inside being sprinkled with salt, and the ham-strings carefully removed, the spitting began. For this purpose they had a long pole, which was thrust through from head to tail, a transverse peg near the end preventing the body from slipping off. The lambs were now carried to the oven, which was by this time well-heated, and were lowered into it carefully, so that the sacrifice might not be defiled by coming in contact with the oven itself. This accomplished, a hurdle was placed over the mouth of the oven, and well-covered with moistened earth, to prevent any of the heat escaping. By this time it was about two o'clock, and this part of the service was ended.

"At sunset the service was recommenced. All the male population, with the lads, assembled round the oven. A large copper

in the land of Egypt; from the firstborn of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne, (that is, who reigned with him,) unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of the cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.¹ And he called for Moses and Aaron by night,

dish, filled with unleavened cakes and bitter herbs, rolled up together, was held by the nephew of the priest, and its contents distributed amongst the congregation. The hurdle was then removed, and the lambs drawn up one by one; but unfortunately one fell off the spit, and was taken up with difficulty. Their appearance was anything but inviting, for they were burnt as black as ebony. Carpets having been spread to receive them they were removed to the platform where the service was read. The congregation stood in two files, the lambs, strewn with bitter herbs, being laid in a line between them. Most of the adults had now a kind of rope round the waist, and staves in their hands, and all had their shoes on, in exact compliance with the words, 'Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, your staff in your hand,' Exod. xii. 11. The chanting was now continued by the priest for about fifteen minutes, ending with the blessing; after which the congregation at once stooped,* and, as if in haste and hunger, tore up the blackened masses piecemeal with their fingers, eating them at once, and carrying portions to the females and little ones in the tents. In less than ten minutes the whole, with the exception of a few fragments, had disappeared. These were gathered and placed on the hurdle, and the area carefully examined, every crumb picked up, together with the bones, and all burnt over a fire, kindled for the purpose in the trough where the water had been boiled. 'And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire,' Exod. xii. 10. Whilst the flames were burning, and consuming the remnant of the paschal lambs, the people returned cheerfully to their tents."

¹ In the Egyptian accounts this destruction was ascribed to a

* When Dean Stanley saw the ceremony they all *sat* to eat.

and said: Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also." These last words seem to gleam through the tears of the humbled king, as he lamented his son snatched from him by so sudden a death, and tremble with a sense of the helplessness which his proud soul at last felt, when the avenging hand of God had visited even his palace. Striking to say, a monument confirms the fact that Menephtah during his lifetime lost his eldest son, who bore the same name as himself. This prince, associated with him on the throne, is commemorated on a colossal statue of his father now in the museum at Berlin. He is "the Uræus snake on the front of the royal crown; the son whom Menephtah loves, who draws towards him his father's heart; the royal scribe; the singer; the chief of the archers; the Prince Menephtah,"

battle with the hated "Shepherds." Jos., *c. Ap.*, i. 27. The Psalmist ascribes it to a sudden and terrible visitation of the plague. "He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over unto the pestilence." Ps. lxxviii. 51. The plague is noticed as often following the Chamsin or pitchy-dark storm wind. Its mortality is sometimes awful. In 1580, 50,000 men died of it in Cairo in eight months. In 1696, as many as 10,000 men in one day! In Constantinople in 1714 it was reckoned that 300,000 died of it. Even in Palestine it made awful ravages, for in 2 Sam. xxiv. we read that 70,000 died of it in three days. Uhlemann strikingly reminds us that all the plagues are connected with the natural peculiarities and phenomena of Egypt, and that they show the narrator's intimate knowledge of the country. "The Almighty hand of God," he continues, "shows itself, hence, not so much in the wonders themselves, as in their wide reach, their intensity, and the swift succession in which they came, at the Divine command—for, individually, they are specially characteristic of Egypt, in a certain degree, at all times."

and is represented as adoring Sutekh, "the great god, the lord of heaven;" and as the "justified," or, as we should say, "the glorified one," and "the blessed," that is, the departed.¹

To this it had all come at last. In the panic fear of the moment things might go as they liked. The policy of generations had given way. No matter, now, if the masses in the Delta, sprung from the foreign prisoners of reign after reign; the hordes of shepherd tribes admitted from time to time to its bounds; and the vast throngs of Hebrews, the most useful and the cheapest labour power of the country—were to be lost in one sweep! Menephtah's reign, mostly peaceful, had seemed more secure from danger than that of the kings before him, for he was in close friendship with the warlike nations of Palestine; his eastern boundary was strongly fortified; and there were no enemies with whom the Hebrews and other foreign races in Egypt could ally themselves. Treaties, moreover, bound the Canaanite kingdoms to give up any fugitives, and those kingdoms, on the edge of whose rich territories the Nomades of the Egyptian frontier, the Hebrew slaves, and the other alien population of the Delta, hung like a war cloud,—as the Arabs threaten the French province of Algiers,—were too highly civilized not to dread their escape from the Nile Valley, as much as the Egyptians themselves. Yet all had now happened which had seemed impossible! Every effort had been made to prevent these masses gathering to a centre. They could be kept under so long as they acted only in isolated bands, but, if they succeeded in rallying to one point, the small brooks which, singly, could be easily dammed, would swell to a torrent that

¹ Lauth, *Aus Alt-Ägyptischer Zeit. Pharao, Moses und Exodus. Allg. Zeitung*, 25th July, 1875.

might perhaps rush, wasting and destroying, on the rich provinces west of Egypt, or turn to the east against Palestine. But even in this case how many thousand private Egyptian interests must suffer, where the alliance was so close as with these countries, and how certain was a new war of resentment !

That Menephtah under such circumstances should have done his utmost to keep the Hebrews scattered over the land, in harmless fractions, was natural. For at least a year, therefore, he had tenaciously maintained an unequal struggle for this end : a struggle of the mightiest on earth against the surely self-accomplishing will of Heaven. He had striven hard to break through the net, but it only drew round him the more closely after each attempt to escape from it. Distracted between granting a demand which undermined his throne, and the breach of promises, each violation of which filled him with dread of new chastisements from heaven, his resistance had finally given way when the awful darkness covered the land with a gloom like that of his own spirit. He had then yielded so far as to grant that the Hebrews might go off into the wilderness, if they left behind them, as a pledge of their return, the herds in which their wealth consisted, from which they derived their nourishment, and without which they were helpless. But Moses had rejected such a conditional favour, and had filled the cup of Menephtah's alarm with the bitter threat of the death of the firstborn of all Egypt, and the prediction that he and his courtiers would presently throw themselves at his feet, beseeching him to leave the stricken land. And all this had come to pass !¹

The terrors of the plagues must have sunk more deeply into the Pharaoh's soul than they otherwise would

¹ *Durch Gosen*, pp. 81-88.

have done, from the fact that his dynasty—the Nineteenth—especially honoured the Canaanitish god Sutekh or Set, who had, it was thought, greatly aided Rameses II. in his wars in Palestine and Syria. He would readily confound this foreign god, whose favour his house had received in the past, and whose anger was therefore the more to be dreaded, with the god of Moses—in his eyes a Canaanite by descent—and fancy that the very power in which he had trusted was turned against him.¹

The number of the Hebrews in Egypt may be approximately gathered from the repeated statement that there were among them 600,000 men able to bear arms—that is, between twenty and sixty years of age.² This would imply a total of at least 2,000,000 of men, women and children;³ an aggregate so great as to have led many to fancy an error in the text. In apparent confirmation of this supposition, the number of the firstborn males, at Sinai, is given⁴ as 22,273, which allows only 1 to every 30 men. But the firstborn of purely Hebrew families may, alone, have been reckoned in this case, while the foreign multitude, and the slaves who went out with the Hebrews, may be counted among the men fit for war.⁵

¹ *Diestel*, in *Riehm*, p. 1022.

² Exod. xii. 37; xxxviii. 26. Num. i. 45, 46.

³ Bertheau calculates 3,000,000.

⁴ Num. iii. 43.

⁵ Joseph's marriage with an Egyptian was no doubt widely imitated, so that many of the Hebrews would be of mixed blood, and many Egyptian women would leave Egypt with them. This intermarriage may in part explain the great increase of the Hebrews. It is to be remembered that even Moses married a Cushite wife. Many slaves and retainers, moreover, had come to Egypt with Jacob, and had most probably been merged into the Hebrew tribes before the time of the Exodus. See Uhlemann, *Israeliten u. Hyksos*, p. 51. Also Lev. xxiv. 10.

Nor is it possible to argue from the present condition of the Sinai Peninsula and the regions immediately south of Palestine, as to the population able to live there for a lengthened period, over 3,000 years ago, by moving from place to place, as the Hebrews did.¹

Everything had been prepared for the final moment, and now the Egyptians, filled with terror, urged the instant departure of the Hebrews. Nor did the long-enslaved multitudes delay. Summoned in the midst of their Passover feast, before the dawn of the 15th of the month thenceforth called Abib, every father hurried, by the light of the full April moon, with his wife and children, to the rendezvous already appointed—to put himself under the leaders of his tribal division; his little ones and the sick in the panniers of asses, his cattle driven before him, the unbaked bread, in the family kneading trough, wrapped up in his abba on his shoulder.² As the avalanche grows in its onward rolling, so swelled the march of the Hebrews as they touched town after town, and were joined not only by fresh crowds of their own race, but by throngs of Semitic prisoners of war, by

¹ Bertheau, *Geschichte der Israeliten*, p. 256. Ebers and some others think there is an error in the numbers, but Bertheau, an acute and independent critic, accepts them, as does also Ewald. The Rev. S. Clark, in the *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 299, thinks the numbers do not exceed a reasonable estimate of the increase of the Israelites, including their numerous dependents.

² "Each Arab wears round his shoulders a sheepskin, which serves the double purpose of a cloak and a baking board. Spread on the ground, fleece downward, the dough is kneaded on it in thin round cakes. They also carry small wooden bowls or troughs to make the dough. Their mill on a journey is simply two stones. Kindling a hot fire of dry camels' dung, they heat the ground well, then brush off the fire, lay down the cake, cover it with the ashes, and in ten minutes it is baked." Stewart's *Tent and the Khar.*

shepherd tribes of Goshen, and multitudes of slaves; bringing with them additional herds and flocks. From Tanis, on the west, they poured south to Fakusa, and thence to Pithom. From Avaris, on the east, on the far north coast, at the fortified wall, past Migdol, with its castle and garrison, they pressed south-west to Rameses. From On, in the south, and all the country between, they streamed northwards, to join the great contingent from the north, at Pithom, where the great canal, running to the Crocodile Sea, branched off from an arm of the Nile. Bubastis, to the east of that town, sent its hosts, and the united multitudes, meeting near Pithom, struck due east to Rameses, on the canal from Bubastis, where all the tribes assembled to follow their great leader. Swift-footed messengers, who are never wanting in the east,¹ had carried the command to start at once for that city. Three or four days after the morning of the 15th would find all gathered at the common centre; separated roughly into their respective tribes, with what arms they could muster, and arrayed for the march, if Ewald be right, in five divisions; the van, centre, two wings, and rear-guard.² They had gained their freedom without bloodshed; the first people who had valued liberty so highly;³ the unconscious champions, for all future ages, of the inalienable rights and dignity of man.

The vast host presently started from Rameses, under Moses, the earliest proclaimer of the essential equality

¹ Mehemet Ali rode 85 miles in 11 hours on a dromedary—from Suez to Cairo—and one of his slaves ran alongside all the way, holding on by a cord.

² Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 89. See Exod. xiii. 18, "harnessed" may mean "armed," "in battle array," "girt for the journey," or, as the margin of our Bibles reads it, "by fives in a rank."

³ Graetz, vol. i. p. 20.

of all races and ranks. He was virtually king, but he disdained the ambition of the name. His office brought with it immeasurable difficulties. These tens of thousands of freshly emancipated slaves, only few of whom understood the mighty work that had been done for them, followed their leader, glad to escape from the lash of the drivers; but only to murmur at their first difficulty on the morrow. Such a people, migrating in mass, he had to lead through the desert to the Land of Promise, caring for them and training their minds and hearts! Out of a horde he had to form a nation; conquering a home for it, giving it social and religious laws, and making it fit for a noble national life. Nor could he reckon on much help in this gigantic task. The tribe of Levi, to which he belonged, was the only one on whose intelligent aid he could rely.¹

Yet, at first, all went well. Grateful wonder at the goodness of Jehovah, intense anxiety to escape from the hated oppressor, joyful trust in their leader, and bright hopes of the future, had roused the long-enslaved masses to a wondrous energy, and the sight of the thousands on every side must have awakened a new sense of power. No dread of future sufferings or dangers yet threw its shadow over them. They had still fresh water and rich fodder for their cattle, and the way was still open before them. The one thought in every bosom was Canaan—the land “flowing with milk and honey”—theirs by the promise of God; and their one tacit demand, that they should be led thither at once. This wish seemed to be granted, when, after a brief rest, the vast host entered on the direct road to Palestine, and at the close of a march north-east, of about fifteen miles, apparently in the line of the freshwater canal to the Bitter Sea,—encamped at

¹ *Graetz*, p. 30.

Succoth, "the tents:" perhaps already the settlement of some shepherd tribe. Water had been within reach all the way, but many of the women must already have fallen behind; children must have been exhausted and ill, and the cattle must have been jaded. Amidst all this, moreover, faint-heartedness crept over the men as they thought of the great fortified wall before them, and that they would presently contend with the swords of well-trained soldiers whose very sticks had hitherto made them tremble. Camping next day near the bastions of Etham,¹ one of the fortresses of the wall, at the edge of the eastern wilderness of the same name, fear grew louder, and though they were still on Egyptian soil, voices were heard regretting that they had not remained slaves, rather than follow Moses, to die in the desert.²

Their great leader, however, knew not only the character of his countrymen, but also the relations of Egypt with the kings of Palestine, and had foreseen what had now happened. He knew that he would be attacked, not only by the garrisons of the frontier Egyptian fortresses, but, ere long, even if these were overpowered, by the princes of southern Canaan, who, whether allied with the Pharaoh or not, would assuredly fall upon a vast migration of escaped slaves and shepherds, seeking a new home. He was, indeed, virtually between two armies, even were he to succeed in breaking through the frontier wall—for the Egyptian chariot soldiery could soon overtake him. He would then have them and the forces of Palestine on his front and rear, and must be destroyed; since, however numerous the crowds that followed him, they were not an army, but a people cumbered with women and children. He knew the disciplined array he would have to face, and the want

¹ Etham means "the Fortress."

² Exod. xiv. 12.

of training, the insubordination, and the over-confident rashness of those he had to lead. Succoth and Etham had revealed their obstinacy, selfishness, and conceit; their want of discipline and of moral strength. Even in the comparatively small limits of an ordinary caravan the strictest order must be maintained at the pitching or striking of the tents. The presence of women and children may, indeed, elicit the best characteristics of some; but on the other hand, perverseness, selfishness, coarseness, and vice show themselves grossly. The tent-pins will not hold in every soil; a tent cannot be raised without a neighbour's help; where water for large numbers is to be had only from one spring, strict order must be kept, and the thirsty willingly abide their turn, if quarrels are to be avoided; when pasture is insufficient for the herds, every shepherd seeks to get a good strip for his cattle, if necessary, by force; and the property of all is exposed before or in the tents. If everything be not ready at the right hour when the tents are struck, either all are delayed, or those who linger behind must be abandoned. But if this be the case with a small body, how much worse would it be with 3,000,000 of people? The camps at Succoth and Etham, in spite of all tribal separation and sub-division, must have been a chaotic confusion of men, women, children, and cattle, which no leader could reduce to order.¹ No wonder, therefore, that the mingled evil of the mass broke out in murmurs and unmanly regrets. It was partly on this account, no doubt, that God led them, not "through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, 'Lest, peradventure the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt;' but made them turn (from before Etham) towards the way of the

¹ *Durch Gosen*, pp. 94-96.

wilderness of the Weedy (Red) Sea ; though they went up in battle array from the land of Egypt.”¹

They had, indeed, set out full of hope that they would soon reach and, if necessary, conquer the Promised Land, and had struck into the well-known road to Palestine, with no foreboding of the weary years they would have to spend in the wilderness, or of the graves awaiting nearly all of them there, or of the difficulties through which their children were to reach the longed-for goal. Moses could give them no hint of his plans, for had they known them they would assuredly have returned to the Nile Valley. He had led them to the frontier fortresses, and now that they stormily clamoured for their old life of slavery, rather than face the death that threatened them, he could cheer them by the intimation that they would not have to fight ; as God had another, less dangerous road for them, towards the Red Sea. He had first to lead them out of Egypt with as little loss as possible, and then to train them to discipline, order, and worthy aims in life. This point reached, they could receive intelligently the full revelations destined for them, and be led victoriously to Palestine. Escape from Egypt lay near at hand, but their education as a people could only be attained by the long work of years, after they had received the laws they were to obey.

Turning therefore² to the south, at some miles distance from the frontier wall, the multitude hastened on, in fear of the Egyptian troops, and in hope of speedy escape from them. For about fifty miles the vast body pressed forward without taking more rest than was needed to refresh them. At last, near the Red Sea, they reached a spot—Pi-hahiroth—“the place where the reeds grow,”³

¹ Exod. xiii. 17 (literally).

² Exod. xiv. 2.

³ *Gesenius*, 9th ed., p. 684. But see meaning in *Brugsch*, p. 194.

over against Baal-zephon, as the Ataka range behind Suez was called by the Phenician sailors.¹ There they could pitch their tents, and take much needed rest, amidst springs of fresh water and abundant pastures. They had turned the great frontier wall with its line of forts, and were safe for the time, in a place not far from the unwatched tongue of the Red Sea, at the present Suez. For the moment they had escaped any conflict with disciplined troops.

Their advance to the fortress wall at Etham and their subsequent apparent retreat, and disappearance in the wilderness, had had the additional result of deceiving the Egyptians, and leading them to suppose that Moses had lost his way, or had given up his design of breaking through to the east, and was now wandering in the desert. The garrisons of the frontier forts must have been informed of the approach of vast masses of people, and would be on the watch; doubtless preparing themselves for an expected attack, and very possibly filling the Hebrews with terror before Etham by the sound of their trumpets. Uncertain where the attempt to break out would be made, they would remain under arms, vainly awaiting assault, and would send off posts to Pharaoh, at Tanis, begging for reinforcements, and telling him that the advancing hordes had disappeared in the desert, to the south-west. It was natural, therefore, that he should believe that they had become entangled and lost in the wilderness.²

The messages brought him must have shown Menephtah at once that Moses had now altogether different intentions from merely going off into the desert to sacrifice; and the loss of such a vast multitude of slaves came back on him in all its force. "Why have we done this," said

¹ Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 98.

² Exod. xiv. 3.

he, "that we have let Israel go from serving us?"¹ He had permitted a pilgrimage to the wilderness to hold a religious feast, with the utmost reluctance, when he



EGYPTIAN WAR CHARIOT. From "L'Égypte"—*Antiquités*.
They generally had two riders: one to drive, the other to fight.

could not help it; but now that the Hebrews were evidently bent on flight, they must be hindered by all the means in his power. They had had a lengthened

¹ Exod. xiv. 5.

start of him, but his cavalry could soon overtake them. Ordering his own war chariots therefore, and 600 selected chariots besides, as his immediate escort; supported by all the chariot-force of Lower Egypt, with fighting men in each, and his "horsemen,"¹ he started in hot haste after the Hebrews.

Under Menephtah, the chariot force of the army had been more assiduously encouraged than under any other of the Pharaohs. The name of one of his "Heads of the Horse" is still preserved; a "chief prophet" of Set, and general of the gendarmerie, who lived at Tanis, the city from which Menephtah now set out. The Delta, that is the former Hebrew district, was in fact the breeding place of the chariot horses, for which its open flatness and its pastures especially suited it. Menephtah's chariot squadrons were his glory, and are constantly mentioned, for their deeds in the field, in the long inscription at Karnak which commemorates his victory over the Libyans and their allies.²

Some time, during which he remained inactive, must, however, have intervened between the departure of the Hebrews and the pursuit. The piety of the Egyptians to the dead was so great that the weightiest political affairs would necessarily be neglected while the king paid the last honours to his dead son. Besides, in this case, the families of the officers and soldiery had also

¹ From "horsemen" being mentioned separately it would seem that, though not named on the monuments, there were cavalry, in our sense, in the Egyptian army. Diodorus Siculus says that Rameses II. had 24,000 horse soldiers besides his chariot regiments.

² Lepsius' *Denkmäler*, vol. iii. p. 199. Dümichen, *Historische Inschriften*, Taf. i.-v. Chabas, *Études*, etc. Thus it says, "he sent his cavalry in all directions." "His Majesty with his cavalry attacked them." "He sent the cavalry after them," and so on.

been universally bereaved. Seventy to seventy-two days were required for public lamentation,¹ and during this time all else would be forgotten by the Pharaoh. It was not till ten weeks after death that the mummy was put in its resting place, with the needful rites detailed in the Book of the Dead. Till then all was at a standstill. Loud wailing rose in the public streets at the moment of death; the forehead was covered with dust or mud, and the head smitten by the hands as a sign of deepest sorrow. When the corpse was opened at the embalming house, the relatives were required to be present. The embalmers then went to their doleful work, not later than the third day, and the family, meanwhile, shut themselves up in strict seclusion till the process was completed, over two months later.²

But if Menephtah was thus forced to give the Hebrews a lengthened breathing time, during which they in a measure organized themselves, while resting in the oasis of Pi-hahiroth, close to Suez, his pursuit was now so much the hotter. Launching his magnificent squadrons after the prey; "the horses," to use the words of an old papyrus,³ "swift as jackals; their eyes like fire; their fury like that of a hurricane when it bursts;" the doom of the Hebrews seemed fixed. The fugitives had at last broken up their encampment and were marching slowly towards the Red Sea, which they designed to reach in the afternoon, at the ebb tide.⁴ The murmur of the waves on the beach was already heard when the clouds of dust on the horizon behind told them they were pursued. Terror seized the host once more at the sight, and fierce accusations of Moses were mingled with loud despair of

¹ *Herod.*, ii. 85. *Diod.*, i. 72, 90. *Gen.* i. 3.

² *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 37. *Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. iii. p. 275.

³ *Anast.*, i.

⁴ *Durch Gosen*, p. 101.

escape. But the great leader, ever calm in the presence of danger, kept the alarm from degenerating into ruinous panic. "Jehovah will fight for you," said he to the terrified crowds, "and ye shall be still;" words which shone out on the despairing multitudes, to use the fine figure of Ebers, "like the sun rising in calm majesty on the lost and almost spent traveller."¹

The sea rose in high waves, and the van of the pursuers was already in sight on the northern shore. The danger was great, but Jehovah had heard the cry of Moses, and ordered the vast host to go forward, though the waters apparently barred their way; promising that, at the uplifted rod of His servant, the waves would be divided and offer a broad pathway on dry ground.²

At the point where Suez lies, the western bank juts out in a point, to the east, so that the bay has only a breadth of two-thirds of an English mile. But, below the town, towards the south, the bank retires in a deep bend to the west, leaving a breadth of water of from three to four English miles. The bottom of this stretch of sea consists, next the land, of sand-banks and rocky soil, firm and level, and sprinkled with sea-grass. The sand-banks run out to this from the eastern shore, and, with the exception of a small opening, are dry at the lowest ebb, or covered with only little water. Such is the southern ford, through which, Robinson was told, the people waded at low water, though the depth, even then, was five feet, in the channel dividing the bank from

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 101. No taunt could be more bitter than that used, "because there are no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" Exod. xiv. 11. Egypt was the land of graves, and especially round Memphis the cemeteries were of immense extent.

² Exod. xiv. 16.

north to south.¹ This, or the ford which runs in a line with Suez, where the waters are so much narrower, may have been the spot at which Jehovah, making use, so far, of natural laws, led the Israelites safely over. Ebb and flood tide, in the narrow northern ford especially, are affected greatly by the wind prevailing at any given time. When it blows strongly from the north-east, which it often does, the waters are driven south, into the bay, on the west shore, leaving four islets stretching in a line north from Suez, and separated from the firm land and from each other, by narrow but deep channels. Near these is the upper ford, which can be passed on foot at the lowest ebb, by those well acquainted with the ground. The other, to the south, bends northwards towards this one, but its length makes it less used.² The waters appear to have reached a little farther east and north at the time of the Exodus than they do at present,³ but either of these lines of sand-bank may

¹ Stickel, *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1850, p. 338. Niebuhr crossed at this part in 1762, on a dromedary; some Arabs, who were up to the knees in the water, accompanying him on foot. *Reisebesch.*, vol. i. p. 251. Bonaparte did the same on his way through the desert. Dubois Aimé, *Description de l'Egypte*, vol. viii. p. 128. Conder supposes Israel to have crossed at the "Bitter Lakes," that is, much above Suez. *Handbook*, p. 238. So does Dr. Hayman, in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, art. *Wilderness of the Wanderings*. So also, Hitzig; *Geschichte*, p. 71. But the hypothesis proceeds on the supposition that the Red Sea came much farther north in the days of Moses, which is entirely conjectural, and rejected by most. In 1672, a strong wind caused such an ebb of the sea off Holland, that the English could not embark, and their detention was the salvation of the country. Burnet's *Hist of Own Times*, vol. i. p. 334.

■ *Durch Gosen*, p. 102.

³ It is pleasant to read in so acute a writer as Niebuhr: "It would be a great mistake to imagine that the passage of such a

have been used, under the guidance and miraculous aid of God.

The night set in dark and stormy, with a violent north-east gale¹ which blew all night, and drove the waters before it, at ebb tide, into the south-west bay, till the sandy ridge of the ford was laid bare : the shore waters thus becoming a wall, or protection, to the Hebrews, on the right, and those of the open sea, on the left hand. The storm prolonging the ebb, delayed the flow of the tide, and thus before morning, the whole of the Hebrews—here, going round pools, there, kept back by the tempest, and by the slow progress of the cattle—were able to reach the east shore ; after a long and slow march, aggravated by the terrors of the night. What these must have been may be imagined from the description in one of the Psalms, ages after :

“The clouds poured out water :

The skies sent out a sound :

Thine arrows (the lightnings) also went abroad.

The voice of Thy thunder rolled along the heavens,²

great caravan (as the Israelites) could have been effected by purely natural means. No caravans go this way nowadays, at least from Cairo to Sinai, though it would be a great saving of distance if they could. But it was even less possible for the children of Israel to cross thus, thousands of years ago, for the water was then apparently much broader, and, besides reaching farther to the north, was far deeper. The water seems not only to have retreated since, but the bottom of this shallow point appears to have been raised by the sand blown in for ages from the desert.”—*Beschreibung von Arabia*, p. 411.

¹ It is to be remembered that the Hebrews gave names only to the four winds from the four cardinal points, so that north-east and south-east, the winds employed by Jehovah in this case, would be regarded as east winds.

² Gesenius says, “was in the whirlwind.”

The lightnings lightened the world :
The earth trembled and shook.”¹

The pursuing Egyptians reached the strand when most of the Hebrews, with their cattle, had crossed in safety. It was a question whether they should at once dash after them, or seek to overtake them by the circuit of the shore. Man and horse were tired out by the forced marches of the last few days, and the night was impenetrably dark. At Etham Jehovah had vouchsafed to guide His people by a cloud through the day and fire by night,² as eastern armies still follow, in many cases, signals of fire and smoke seen at the front of the march.³ This light, which the Pharaoh perhaps fancied such a signal, now moved from before the Hebrews and came to their rear,⁴ at once quickening and guiding laggards and stragglers, and misleading the Egyptians as to the progress made by the host. Thinking that the storm would keep back the waters, and seeing their prey so near, passion overcame prudence in the pursuers. Their

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 17, 18.

² Exod. xiii. 21.

³ Alexander the Great had a huge cresset set up on a tall pole over his tent as a signal for departure, seen far off by all, by its light in darkness and its smoke by day. *Curtius*, v. 2. On the march the holy fire was always carried before the army on silver altars. *Curtius*, iii. 2. Seetzen quotes from an old Arab MS. the fact that the caliphs used fire to send news swiftly—the brightness serving this end by day and the smoke by night. The vast pilgrim caravans to Mecca, guide themselves in a similar way. An Egyptian general, in an ancient inscription, is compared to a flame streaming in advance of an army, and this is repeated in an old papyrus.—Chabas, *V. E.*, p. 54. *Pap. Anast.*, i.

⁴ Exod. xiv. 19, 20. The Syriac reads, “And there were clouds and darkness all the night, but there was light to the children of Israel all the night.” The Sept. reads, “there arose clouds and darkness, and the night passed, etc.”

squadrons, therefore, rushed to the ford, rank pressing on rank after those who claimed to know the way, towards the light which they might well fancy marked the leader's place, at the front. Meanwhile, according to Josephus,¹ a terrible storm of rain, with dreadful thunder and lightning, broke out, and helped, with the loud and fierce wind, to bewilder the charioteers; who, it may be, were led still more astray by different signal fires of the sections of the Hebrews, kindled as a flaming banner, to guide their divisions in the wild blackness. But, now, when the whole host of the Egyptians were committed to the ford, the wind suddenly veered round, and blew towards the land instead of from it; driving before it the foaming waters of the rising tide. Advance was henceforth hopeless, but so, also, was retreat, for the wheels sank in the water-covered sand, and bent or snapped the axles,² hurling the charioteers headlong from their places, to use the metaphor in the sacred text, like stones from a sling.

Mortal terror now seized the pursuers; for the God of the Hebrews was "looking out on them," and once more fighting against them from that fiery cloud.³ But escape was impossible. The south-west wind blowing wildly from the clefts and gorges of the Ataka hills—the wind most dreaded by the boatmen of Suez—drove the waters before it, and ere long the chariots and the heavily mailed soldiery of Pharaoh, held in the remorseless grip of the yielding sands, were overwhelmed, and miserably perished. Next morning all was over, and the tri-

¹ Jos., *Ant.*, II. xvi. 3.

² The Sept. reads that the wheels were "bound" or "clogged" by the sand.

³ Exod. xiv. 24. Translate "troubled" as "threw into confusion."

umphant Hebrews saw the corpses washed up, in heaps, along the sea-shore. Such a deliverance filled all minds with awe, for they felt that Jehovah alone had inflicted this great defeat upon their enemies. Now, as never before, they feared and believed in Him, and in His servant Moses.¹

A document translated by M. Chabas may perhaps refer to the escape of the Hebrews. It runs thus: "Notice! when my letter reaches you, bring the Madjai at once, who were over the foreign Salkhi who have escaped. Do not bring all the men I have named in my list. Give attention to this. Bring them to me to Takhu, and I will admit them and you." Takhu was a fortress which defended the eastern frontier of the Delta, and this letter may well be an order to recall the gendarmerie who had watched the wall when the Hebrews were advancing to it.²

It is, of course, idle to expect that Egypt would record a disaster so terrible as that of the Red Sea, but a papyrus of the next period strangely confirms its magnitude, by showing the virtual breaking up of the kingdom of the Pharaohs from that date. The events of the later period of Menephtah's reign are passed over in perfect silence³ by the monuments. After him, the empire

¹ Exod. xiv. 30, 31. I have made use of Ebers for the most part in this narrative of the crossing of the Red Sea.

The name of the Red Sea, Yam Suph, is stated by Stickel (*Studien u. Kritiken*, 1850, p. 330), to be derived from the woolly tuft of the ripe shore reed, which grows very thickly on the edge of the sea. It was called in Egypt the Reedy Sea. The Hebrews divided the night into three watches: the first from sunset to ten; the second from ten to two; the third from two to sunrise. The passage of the sea was in April, when the sun rose about six a.m. Rosenmüller, *Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. ii. p. 18.

² *Pap. Anast.*, V. 18, 6, pl. 19, 2. ³ *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 130.

which Seti I. and Rameses II. had established at so great a cost of war and energy, went ignominiously to pieces, and his successors Seti II. and Menephtah II. could not prevent even single counties of the Delta from breaking loose from their rule, declaring themselves independent, and setting up dynasties of their own. The great Harris Papyrus says of this time: "The population of Egypt had broken away over the borders, and among those who remained there was no commanding voice, for many years. Hence Egypt fell under dynasties which ruled the towns. One killed the other in wild and fatal enterprises. Other disasters succeeded, in the shape of years of famine. Then Aarsu, a Syrian, rose among them, as prince, and the whole land did him homage. One leagued with the other and plundered the magazines, and the very gods acted as men did," that is, they seemed to waste the earth by their judgments.

Note to page 162.—Munk says: "The firstborn of beasts were apparently (among others) the sacred animals. Hence the Tenth Plague is regarded as a judgment on the gods of Egypt." Exod. xii. 12. Num. xxxiii. 4. *Palästina*, p. 269. He also thinks the Israelites crossed at the south end of the Bitter Sea (or Lake), north of Suez. Page 271.





CHAPTER VII.

THE MARCH TO SINAI.

HOW long the Hebrews remained in Egypt has been much disputed. It is stated by St. Paul that from the date of the covenant to Abraham, to the proclamation of the Mosaic law on Sinai, was 430 years,¹ and this is stated also in Exodus.² In Genesis³ the Egyptians are predicted as destined to afflict the Hebrews 400 years, and this is repeated by St. Stephen in his defence.⁴ Respecting these two numbers, 430 and 400 years, there is little difficulty, as the one is only a round number, whilst the other is a precise statement. But in Genesis⁵ it is said that the return to Canaan was to be in the fourth generation from the time of God's covenant with Abraham; so that an average of over 100 years is thus presumed for each. Jewish interpreters, however, assuming the length of a generation as only about 50 years, have divided the longer period into two; allotting 215 years to the interval between the descent of Abraham to Egypt and that of Jacob, and the same time to the residence there of his posterity. But this is not necessary, if we remember the length of life assigned in

¹ Gal. iii. 17.

² Exod. xii. 40, 41.

³ Gen. xv. 13.

⁴ Acts vii. 6.

⁵ Gen. xv. 16.

the Bible to the patriarchs, for Abraham himself died at the age of 175,¹ Isaac at that of 180,² Jacob at that of 147,³ Joseph at that of 110, and Moses at that of 120.⁴ It is hardly to be expected that evidence in corroboration of such matters should be accessible from outside sources, but on many Egyptian inscriptions we still meet with the prayer which very few would think of offering now, that the writer may reach the perfect age of 110 years; and in a papyrus, preserved in Paris, of the date of the Twelfth Dynasty,⁵ that is, at least as old as Abraham, one Patah-hotep, who describes himself as 110 years old, speaks of his father, the reigning king, as still alive, and indeed, addresses him; so that he must have been about 130 years old.⁶

Near the spot where the Hebrews reached the land on the east shore,⁷ a plain runs back from the sea to a fertile oasis of considerable size, still known as Ayun Mûsa, the "Springs of Moses"—a quarter of an hour's distance from the beach. Flowing springs still produce a rich vegetation, before the quickening moisture loses itself in the sand. High-stemmed and wide-branched palms, acacias, and tamarisks, are mingled with undergrowth, which is cleared away, here and there, for vegetable beds;⁸ but this fertility may have extended much more widely 3,000 years ago, for the Egyptians were born gardeners. Here, apparently, the first camp was pitched on the east

¹ Gen. xxv. 7.

² Gen. xxxv. 28.

³ *Dict. of Bible*, art. *Jacob*. Schenkel's *Lex.* makes him 170.

⁴ Deut. xxxiv. 7.

⁵ *Maspero*, p. 85. *Brugsch*, vol. i. p. 92.

⁶ *Facsimile d'un Papyrus Egyptien*. Par M. Prisse d'Avennes. Pl. 19, lines 7 and 8.

⁷ Hitzig thinks the date of the Exodus was March 30th, B.C. 1512. *Geschichte*, p. 73. Schenkel says B.C. 1460. Ebers says B.C. 1317.

⁸ Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 68.

of the Red Sea. Their miraculous escape had raised the excitable spirit of the vast host to a delirium of joy. From the extremity of peril they had passed, in a night, to safety. An almost helpless multitude, cumbered with women, children, and cattle, with the sea before them and the terrible chariots of Egypt behind—they had seen a way made for them through the waters, and the chivalry of the greatest empire in the world overwhelmed when pressing after them. They had been simply spectators of the great deliverance wrought for them by the invisible God, whom Moses had proclaimed as their Leader, and whom their fathers had worshipped. There was no room for pride: they could only look with grateful eyes to the heavens, from which alone their rescue had come. Jehovah was assuredly a God above all gods, and He had proclaimed them His Chosen People, by redeeming them thus with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Such an event, which distant ages would remember with lasting awe, demanded a corresponding recognition from those who had witnessed it. The emotion that filled all hearts could find adequate utterance only in song and public rejoicing, in honour of their divine Protector.

The sacred dance was a part of most ancient religions. Even now the young women of Egypt thus greet the rising of the Nile—a relic of the old sacred festival of the river. The Indians, in antiquity, danced before the rising sun, in his honour, and sacred dances were in use among the Romans. Indeed, the Greek Church still retains at Easter some traces of this antique form of worship, and the dancing dervishes of Turkey and Central Asia are well known. It seemed, in fact, to the ancient world as fitting to express their joy thus as by singing, to which it appeared the natural adjunct, expressive of the glad-

ness of the worshipper's whole being.¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that the Hebrew word for a religious festival means, literally, a circling dance,² or that when Moses asked Pharaoh to let the people go, to hold a feast to Jehovah in the wilderness, the word refers to this chief characteristic of such festivities.³ The deliverance of the nation, by the direct intervention of Jehovah in its behalf, was hence naturally celebrated by a solemn festival in His honour, in which sacred dances took a prominent part. But the dance was always an accompaniment to song, and this was provided in the grand lyric known as the Song of Moses—the oldest and noblest triumphal ode we possess. It ran thus :⁴

I will sing to Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously ;⁵
The horse and its rider hath He hurled into⁶ the sea.
Jehovah is my Victory and Song : He is my deliverer ;
He is my God, I will praise Him ;
The God of my fathers, I will exalt Him !

Jehovah is a hero of war : Jehovah is His name !
The chariots of Pharaoh and his Might He cast into the sea :
His chosen captains⁷ were drowned in the Weedy Sea.
The depths covered them ;
They sank to the bottom like a stone.⁸

¹ Exod. xxxii. 6. There are still, at fixed times, sacred dances in the Cathedral of Seville, as part of the public worship.

² *Hag*, in *Gesenius*, 9th edition, p. 252.

³ Exod. v. 1. It is the same in Lev. xxiii. 41. "Ye shall keep a feast (or 'dance') unto Jehovah seven days in the year." In Ps. xlii. 4, "The multitude that kept holy day," is literally, "that celebrated religious dances."

⁴ See translations of Koster (*Studien u. Kritiken*, 1831, p. 69), Knobel, Ewald, Herder, Bunsen, and Kalisch.

⁵ Lit., He is gloriously glorious.

⁶ As from a sling.

⁷ Officers of the highest rank especially attending the Pharaoh.

⁸ The weight of their armour would make them helpless to

Thy right hand, O Jehovah, glorious in power,
Thy right hand, O Jehovah, broke in pieces the foe.

In the greatness of Thy excellency Thou hast overthrown them
that opposed Thee,
Thou didst let loose Thy fiery indignation, and it consumed them
like stubble.¹

Before the breath of Thy nostrils² the waters piled themselves
up;
The floods stood up like a dam—
The waves were congealed in the midst of the sea.

The foe said: "I will pursue: I will overtake:
I will divide the prey; I will glut my revenge on them,
I will draw out my sword, and destroy them."

Then Thou breathedst with Thy wind; the sea covered them;
They whirled down like lead in the rushing waters.

Who is like unto Thee, among the gods, O Jehovah!
Who is like unto Thee; so great in Thy majesty!
So fearful in glory; doing such wondrous deeds!

Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand,
Then the earth swallowed them up.

Thou leddest by Thy grace the people whom Thou didst redeem,
Thou leddest them by Thy strength to Thy holy habitation.³

escape. The corslets of the officers were of bronze, with sleeves reaching nearly to the elbow, and covering the whole body, and the thighs nearly to the knees. The chariot warriors also are always represented with heavy coats of mail. *Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 366.

¹ The word for stubble in the Hebrew text is Egyptian.

² A poetical expression for the natural agency of the stormy wind. All natural phenomena are thus ascribed by the Hebrews to the direct act of God—"God thunders,"—"God gives rain,"—"God giveth snow," etc.

³ Palestine.

The peoples shall hear it and be afraid,
Trembling shall seize the inhabitants of Philistia.¹

The princes of the tribes of Edom are in terror;
The mighty men² of Moab, trembling seizes them;

The inhabitants of Canaan melt for fear!

Fear and dread fall on them,

At the greatness of Thine arm they stiffen, in terror, like stone,
Till Thy people, O Jehovah, have passed over;³

Till Thy people, whom Thou hast made Thine own, have passed
over,

Till Thou hast brought them in, and planted them on the mount
of Thine inheritance.⁴

The place, O Jehovah, which Thou hast made Thy dwelling;
The Sanctuary, O Jehovah, which Thy hands have prepared!

Jehovah is king for ever and ever!

For Pharaoh's horse, and his chariots, and his riders, went into
the Sea,

And Jehovah brought back over them the waters;

But the children of Israel went on, dry, through the depths.

¹ The first who would expect an invasion. Pelasheth, the country of the Philistines, is, as has been said, the original of the name Palestine.

² *Lit.*, "the rams," a metaphor for strength, etc. See Jer. xlviii. 29, 41. The men of Moab were famous for their strength and size. The metaphor applies aptly to them as great "sheep-masters."

³ The Jordan.

⁴ Palestine, a country of hills, was holy to Jehovah, and is probably meant, as a whole, but the allusion may be to Mount Moriah, at Jerusalem; though it was not used for sacred purposes till after David bought the threshing-floor of Araunah, on it, and Solomon crowned it with his temple. In Isa. lxxv. 9, Canaan is called by Jehovah "My mountains." It is also called "that goodly mountain," Deut. iii. 25, and "this mountain," in Ps. lxxviii. 54. It is also called in that verse "His Sanctuary," as in the Song of Moses, though the words may be translated "His holy border."

The burden of this magnificent ode sank into the hearts of the Hebrew race, and fired the genius of inspired poets, century after century, reappearing again and again in psalm and prophecy.¹ As here, the strain of all these allusions to the great deliverance is, that "not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."² Nor did its echoes die away with the Jewish dispensation. As a triumphant celebration of God's victory over His enemies, it is even transferred in the Apocalypse to those who stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire, having the harps of God, and singing "the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb."

Uttered first, in all probability, by a single voice, from some rock which lifted the reciter above the vast multitude between the hills and the sea, its refrain was caught up by the women and maidens of Israel, and sung by them as they danced for joy—for in the east, as a rule, only women dance—their tambourines held over their head, and struck in unison as they moved. Miriam,³ the sister of Aaron and Moses, noblest as well as first of the daughters of the people, led the way, the whole chorus of sisters following, their right hands beating in time the skin disk of their simple instrument, round which rows of shells, or pieces of metal added to the joyful noise. Then would strike in the deep, solemn chorus of the men, every voice expressing, in its loudest chant,

¹ See Ps. lxxvii. 12-20; lxxviii.; cv.; cvi.; cxiv.

² Ps. cxv. 1.

³ Miriam is called a "prophetess," but this often means in Scripture only one who says or makes known the doings of God, or His praises, whether with or without musical instruments. Thus the singers appointed by David are called "prophets," and are said "to prophesy with harps," etc., and "to give thanks and to praise the Lord." 1 Chron. xxv. 1-3.

enthusiasm and gratitude for the wondrous deliverance vouchsafed. In one of the Psalms we have a glimpse of a scene in some respects similar: the rejoicings at the consecration of the Tabernacle erected by David. Then, "Singers went before; players on stringed instruments followed after, and, between, came damsels playing on timbrels.¹ In full choir, the sons and daughters of the Fountain of Israel praised God, even Jehovah;"² "David and all the House of Israel playing before Jehovah with all their might and with singing,³ even on harps, and on psalteries, and on castanets⁴ and on cymbals."

Traditions of an event so striking as the escape of the Israelites, lingered for ages among the neighbouring peoples. The tribes on the east of the Red Sea, says Diodorus of Sicily, who was in Egypt shortly before the birth of Christ, "have a tradition which has been handed down among them from age to age, that the whole bay at the head of the sea was once laid bare by ebb tides, the water heaping itself on the other side, so that the bottom was seen." Artapanus, a Greek who lived some time before Christ, and wrote a book on the Jews, of which some fragments have been preserved by Eusebius, records that "the priests of Memphis were wont to say that Moses had narrowly studied the time of ebb and flow of the Red Sea, and led his people through it when the sand was bare. But the priests of Hieropolis tell this story otherwise. They say that when the king of Egypt pursued the Jews, Moses struck the waters with

¹ The tambourine is still used universally in the East by women when they dance or sing. *Niebuhr*, in *Rosenmüller's Scholia*, vol. i. p. 495.

² Ps. lxxviii. 25, 26. *Ewald*.

³ 2 Sam. vi. 5. Sept. and most recent critics.

⁴ Literally. See also Ps. cl. 3-5.

his rod and the waters forthwith turned back, so that the Israelites passed over dryshod. But the Egyptians having ventured on the same dangerous path, were blinded by fire from heaven, and the sea having rushed back to its bed, they all perished, partly by the thunderbolts, partly in the waters."¹

A new theory advanced by Brugsch, with respect to the scene of the destruction of Pharaoh's host, has excited some attention. This eminent scholar, differing from all others, supposes that the Israelites, instead of turning southward towards Suez, marched to the north-east, in the direction of Pelusium.² Baal-zephon, he thinks, was a temple on Mount Casios, outside the Egyptian boundary wall, in the direction of Canaan, while, instead of the "Red," he thinks we ought to read the "Weedy Sea;" a name given not only to the Red Sea but to the wide and terrible abysses known as the Sirbonian lakes, between Pelusium and Goshen, near the Mediterranean coast. Between these lakes and the Mediterranean there still runs a narrow bar of coast, forming a possible line of communication between Egypt and Palestine, but covered in great storms by the foaming waters of the outside ocean. Along this pathway, he supposes, the Israelites were led in safety, while Pharaoh's army, attempting it, were met by a blinding storm, which submerged the narrow coast line, and threw them into such confusion that they lost their way, and were swallowed up in the bottomless lakes at its southern edge. We cannot adopt this hypothesis, but the great reputation of M. Brugsch claims a statement of it in his own interesting words.

"According to monumental indications," he says, "in accordance with what the classic traditions tell us of it, the Egyptian route led from Migdol to the Mediter-

¹ *Præparat.*, ix. 27, 436. ² Pelusium = Mud-town (*Bib. Lex.*, art. *Sin*).

anean, up to the wall of Gerrhon (the fortified wall of Egypt), at the extremity of the Lake of Sirbonis."

"Separated from the Mediterranean by a tongue of land which offered in ancient times the only Egyptian way into Palestine, this lake, or rather lagoon, covered with a rich vegetation of rushes and papyri, but in our day almost dried up, hid the unforeseen danger which lurked in the nature of its borders, and in the presence of its fatal gulfs, of which an ancient author has left us the following description.

"On the side of the Levant, Egypt is protected, partly by the Nile, partly by the desert, and by the swampy plains called by the name of Barathra, gulfs. There is in Coele-Syria and in Egypt, a lake which is not very large, of a prodigious depth, and in length about 200 stadia.¹ It is called Sirbonis, and is very dangerous to the traveller approaching it unawares, for its basin being very narrow, like a ribbon, and its swampy borders very wide, it often happens that these are covered with a mass of sand, brought by the continual south winds. This sand hides from sight the sheet of water which intermingles with the soil. Through this, whole armies have been swallowed up, in ignorance of the place, and from having mistaken their way.² The sand slightly trodden on, leaves at first only the trace of the steps, and thus deceives those who have ventured on it, until, suspecting their danger, they seek to save themselves at the moment when there remains no means of escape. For a man thus engulfed in the mud can neither move nor extricate

¹ About twenty-five miles.

² Compare Milton, *Par. Lost*, II. 592:—

"A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casios old,
Where armies whole have sunk."

himself, the action of the body being hindered : neither can he get out of it ; having no solid support by which to raise himself up. This intimate mixture of the water and the sand, constitutes a kind of substance on which it is impossible to walk, and through which one cannot swim. Thus, those who find themselves caught there, are dragged away to the bottom of the abyss, since the banks of sand sink with them. Such is the nature of these plains, to which the name Barathra—gulfs—perfectly suits.’¹

“The Hebrews, on approaching this tongue of land in the north-east direction, found themselves thus confronted by these gulfs : or, according to the Egyptian texts, opposite Khirst—the ancient name, which answers exactly to the gulfs in the lake of Sea Weed—near the place Gerrhon. Thus will be perfectly understood the Biblical expression Pi-hahiroth, a word which literally designates ‘the entrance to the bogs,’ and agrees with the geographical situation. This indication is finally pointed out by another ;—for Baal-zephon—‘the Master of the North’—was, as Baal Zaponni—the Egyptian god Amon, of Thebes, the great falconer, who crossed the lagoons ; the master of the northern countries, and, above all, of the marshes, to whom the inscriptions give the name of the Master of Khirst, that is to say, ‘gulf’ of the papyrus lagoons. To the Greeks he became Zeus Casios, and had a sanctuary at the point of the extreme Egyptian frontier on the eastern side. . . .

“After the Hebrews crossed on foot the shallows which extend between the Mediterranean and the lake of Serbonis, a high tide overtook the Egyptian horsemen and the captains of the chariots of war who fiercely pursued them. Baffled in their movements by the presence

¹ *Diodorus*, i. 30.

of their frightened horsemen, and thrown into disorder by their chariots of war, there happened to these soldiers and charioteers, that which in the course of history has sometimes occurred, not only to simple travellers, but also to whole armies. . . .

“When, in the first century of our era, the geographer Strabo, a wise man and great observer, was travelling in Egypt, he entered in his journal the following notice :—

“‘At the time of my sojourn in Alexandria, there was a high tide at the town of Pelusium, and near to Mount Casios. The waters inundated the country, so that the mountains appeared to be islands, and the road near them, leading towards Pelusium, became practicable for ships.’

“Another fact of the same nature is related by an ancient historian. Diodorus, in describing a campaign of King Artaxerxes, against Egypt, mentions a catastrophe which happened to his army at the same place :—

“‘When the Persian king,’ says he, ‘had united all his troops, he made them advance toward Egypt. Having arrived at the Great Lake, where they found places named “gulfs,” he lost part of his army, because he was ignorant of the character of this region.’”¹

This theory, which seems so plausible, has not, however, as has been said, commended itself to scholars, and has been rudely shaken by recent investigations of the locality. Instead of a connected road along the shore, it has been found that there is a long interval which is bare only at ebb tide, making it almost impossible to pass by this way to Palestine.² The coast line may certainly have changed in three thousand years, but even

¹ *Transactions of Orientalist Congress*, 1874, pp. 277-279.

² *Pal. Fund Reports*, 1880, p. 143.

if so, the fact that this route would have brought the Hebrews face to face with the Egyptian army at Pelusium seems conclusive that it could not be the one followed by Moses.

The Egyptian account of the escape of the Hebrews from the Nile Valley is necessarily very different from that of the Bible, but its very contrast is interesting, while some details seem to throw light on particulars not otherwise known. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, paraphrased, and in part quoted verbatim by Josephus, thus describes it:¹—

“Amenophis (a corrupted form of Menophthis or Menephtah) had a desire to see the gods, as Horus,² one of his predecessors had done, and had told this to another Amenophis, the son of one of the priests of Apis—the Sacred Ox—who had the reputation of being inspired, from his wisdom, and because he could foretell things future. This man had said to him that he would see the gods when he had cleansed the country of all lepers³ and other polluted persons. The king, rejoiced at this, gathered every one who had a bodily uncleanness, from every part of Egypt, to the number of 80,000, and sent the whole to the quarries on the east side of the Nile, to work in them, and be wholly separated from the other Egyptians. Among them, Manetho says, were some priests of note who were polluted by leprosy. The wise,

¹ Jos., *Contra Apion*, i. 15, 26, 32. I use the version of Bunsen, founded on the best text of Josephus. *Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 134.

² The last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

³ The leprosy was regarded by the ancients as a disease peculiar to Egypt. Pliny (xxvi. 1) calls it so, as also does Diodorus (i. 80). Lucretius says expressly, “Leprosy is a disease born in Egypt, along the waters of the Nile, and nowhere else.” So that the Hebrews brought it with them from their Egyptian slavery. Quoted in *Uhlemann*, p. 60.

prophetic man, Amenophis, now dreaded the wrath of the gods on himself and the king, when he saw how these men (the lepers, etc.) were treated, and in the end he predicted that certain people would come to their help, and would rule over Egypt thirteen years. Yet he did not venture to say this to the king, but he committed it to writing for him, and then killed himself. The king, at all this, was in great trouble. "Then," says Josephus, "Manetho continues, 'When these people had lived miserably in the quarries for a good while, the king was asked to appoint them as a colony and guard, in the city Avaris, then lying desolate, through the departure of the Shepherds (the Hyksos). This town from the first had belonged to the god Seth or Typhon (the evil one). When, now, they had gone to this town, and had thus reached a point from which they could readily break out of the country, they made a certain priest of Heliopolis, by name Osarphis—"the consecrated to Osiris"—their leader, and swore a solemn covenant that they would obey him. He gave them first, as a law, that they should not bow down before any of the gods, and that they should not refrain from eating the holy animals most revered in Egypt, but should kill and use them all for food, and they were further to associate with none but members of their league. After he had given them these laws, and others similarly opposed in the highest degree to Egyptian customs, he commanded them to strengthen the walls of Avaris to the utmost, and prepare for war against Amenophis, the king. Moreover, he gathered round him some of the other priests and polluted ones, and sent ambassadors to the town called Jerusalem, to the Shepherds whom Thothmes had driven out. He told them his position and that of his fellow-outcasts, and besought them to invade Egypt along with

him. He promised to lead them first to Avaris, the city of their fathers, and to provide them richly with all necessities, if required, and to subdue the country to them without difficulty. They, greatly pleased, forthwith came to Avaris with 700,000 men. When, now, Amenophis, the king of Egypt, learned of the invasion of these people, he was in great fear, got the holy animals which were held in the highest honour, and kept in the temples, brought to his capital, and commanded the priests to conceal all the images of the gods as securely as possible, and sent his son Sethos—who was five years old, and was called, also, Rameses, after Rameses, the father of Amenophis—to his friend the king of the Ethiopians. He himself crossed the west arm of the Nile with his army, which consisted of about 300,000 soldiers of the greatest prowess. Yet when he reached the enemy, he fought no battle, but taking the fancy that he was fighting against the gods, he fled and came back to Memphis. There he took the Apis and the other holy animals which he had collected round him, and marched off with them, and with his whole army, and a multitude of Egyptians, to Ethiopia, the king of which—at once his friend and tributary—received him, and provided all his train with everything the land offered for food, besides granting them sufficient cities and villages, for the thirteen years during which he believed the sovereignty of Egypt was to be taken from him. In addition, the king of Ethiopia set an army on the watch on the borders of Egypt, along with those whom King Amenophis had left behind him there. This happened in Ethiopia. But the Jerusalemites who had invaded the land, along with those polluted ones of Egyptian origin, bore themselves so cruelly that the dominion of the Shepherd Kings seemed a golden age

to those who saw the present wickedness. For not only did they destroy the towns: they even burned down the temples, and mutilated the carved images, and habitually used the holy of holies of the venerated sacred animals for kitchens, and forced the priests and prophets of the holy animals to kill them (for food), after which these venerable men were themselves killed, and their bodies thrown out, naked, on the streets. It is said that the man Osarsiph of Heliopolis, who founded their state and made their laws, when he went over to the Shepherds, changed his name and was called Moses.'

"I pass over," says Josephus, "for brevity, other particulars which the Egyptians relate of the Jews. Manetho, however, tells further, that Amenophis afterwards returned from Ethiopia with a great army, and with his son Rameses, who also led an army: that they fought with the Shepherds and the polluted ones, overcame them, killed many, and drove the rest to the boundaries of Syria."

The confusion of events and times is evident in this strange story; but there seems to glimmer through it a proof that the Exodus was preceded by fierce religious disputes between the Hebrews and the Egyptians, and by terrible persecutions, extending even to the better classes. The reproach of leprosy, indeed, was only an ordinary expression of religious hatred, embodying the idea of religious rather than physical impurity; for all "unclean" persons were habitually denounced in this way.

The huge Hebrew camp at Ayun Mûsa broke up at last, after we know not how long a stay, and the host moved on, following its leader, to the south. On their right, across the narrow ribbon of blue sea, rose the wild peaks of the Ataka mountains, almost the last glimpse they were to have of Africa; on their left, Asia was shut

out from them by the hills of El Raha ; the western edge of the upland wilderness of the Tih. The track still used for caravans from Sinai, to Suez or Cairo, must have been followed ; leading them wearily, at some distance from the sea, amidst the glowing heat¹ of skies without a cloud, over a desert hard to the feet and strewn with sharp flints.² Wadys, mostly dry, but occasionally trickling with salt-tasting water, had to be crossed, but no drinkable springs invited the vast host to refresh themselves and their herds. Everything was dreary and barren. Nothing living met their eye, except perhaps a raven, a beetle, or a lizard.³ High sandhills shut out the sea on their right ; the Raha hills frowned down on them on the other side of the march, and the road, whitened with the bleaching bones of camels which had fallen by the way⁴ in the past, grew more rolling and hilly as they advanced. It was the wilderness of Shur. For three days the vast multitude toiled along, relying on the waterskins they had brought with them from Ayun Mûsa ; but these were at last exhausted, and the agonies of thirst began to tell on all. It was a dismal beginning of their new history, and contrasted keenly with the expectations they must have formed after their triumphal deliverance from Pharaoh. At last, however, they reached Huwarah, then known as Marah, and found water, but it was too salt and bitter to drink. Their moral training had already begun. Jehovah had saved them at the Red Sea, and would have them learn to trust Him for the future. But it was a hard lesson, and the camp once more broke out in loud murmurs against Moses. It was indeed an awful test of their reliance on their unseen Guide and Protector.

¹ Ebers speaks of the heat as scorching even in March. *Durch Gosen*, p. 112.

² Ebers, p. 114. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 115. ⁴ Marah, in *Riehm*, p. 953.

Barton describes a day near the track of the Israelites. "At dawn," says he, "it is mild and balmy as an Italian spring, and inconceivably lovely in the colours it sheds on earth, air, and sky. But presently the sun bursts up from the sea, a fierce enemy that will force every one to crouch before him. For two hours his rays are endurable, but after that they become a fiery ordeal. The morning beams oppress you with a feeling of sickness, their steady glow blinds your eyes, blisters your skin and parches your mouth, till you have only one thought—when evening is to come. At noon the heat, reverberated by the glowing hills, is like the blast of a limekiln. The wind sleeps on the reeking shore. The sky is a dead white. Men are not so much sleeping as half senseless. They feel as if a few more degrees of heat would be death."¹ Under such circumstances the want of water is an indescribable calamity, and the excitement and confusion when some is found, or is supposed to be found, are terrible. "The crowd of thirsty men," says Buckingham, describing such a scene, "plunged at once into the stream in the darkness of the night, ignorant of its depths, which drowned some of the horses. The cries of the animals, the shouting and quarrelling of the people, and the sense of danger on every hand was awful."² No wonder that in the wondrous opening passage of Mendelssohn's "Elijah," genius, trying to represent the despair of a whole people perishing from thirst—after giving it vent at first in sullen, restless murmurings, pictures it as gathering at length a terrible cumulative strength, and bursting forth almost appallingly, in cries of heartrending and importunate agony.

Yet help was near at hand, could they but have

¹ Burton's *Meccah*, 3rd ed., p. 145.

² Buckingham's *Mesopotamia*, vol. ii. p. 8.

believed in the God to whom they had vowed themselves so recently. "And Moses cried unto Jehovah: and Jehovah showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the water, the waters were made sweet," and the thirst of all relieved. A gracious promise was, besides, vouchsafed, that if they faithfully obeyed the Divine commands and followed Jehovah loyally they would have no such diseases sent among them as had been inflicted on the Egyptians.

Huwarah is from fifteen to seventeen hours of the slow tread of camels from Ayun Mûsa, and thus suits the position of Marah, as "three days" distant from that place. On a sandhill on the caravan road to Sinai, surrounded by a few straggling palms and thorn bushes, there is still a shallow spring, from which Ebers, attempting to drink, was warned off by his guide with the cry, "Morra, Morra," the Arab for Marah, "bitter." Indeed, even after his adding brandy, it was found bitterly salt.¹ The Arabs and their camels only drink it when in the extremity of thirst, and even then some will not taste it.² The small quantity of water now found has

¹ *Ebers*, p. 117. This is caused by the action of sesquicarbonate of soda, with which the soil of the whole neighbourhood is impregnated.

² Burckhardt, in Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 160. Robinson and Seetzen, however, say their camels drank readily of it. Robinson's *Palest.*, vol. i. p. 106. Its taste seems to depend on the time of the year. Kneucker supports the opinion that the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea far above Suez, at the "Bitter Sea," the water then, he thinks, reaching thither. He consequently fancies Marah much farther to the north than Huwarah. *Bibel-Lexicon*, vol. iv. p. 111. There is certainly at the place he indicates, Ain Nuba, three hours south of Suez, a very bitter spring, of much larger volume than that at Huwarah. Brugsch and Hitzig also think this was Marah, supposing that the crossing took place at the Bitter Sea, but the opinion seems untenable.

been urged as a ground for questioning the correctness of its identification with the Marah of Exodus, but the sand may have choked up the spring in thousands of years, besides affecting the supply otherwise, and moreover there are traces of its much greater abundance in some years than in others. It is the first water found in any quantity after leaving Suez, and suits the requirements of the sacred narrative both as to distance, and from the fact that there are no other bitter springs in the neighbourhood.¹

Travellers, with one exception hitherto, have failed to discover any tree or plant in the district which has any effect in sweetening the spring. Lesseps, however, tells us, that Arab sheiks assured him they were accustomed to put a kind of barberry which grows in the desert into such bitter water, to make it palatable,² and the remark of Palmer is worthy of notice, that the Bedouins use the word "tree" for everything with any medicinal properties.³ There are, besides, in other countries, plants and trees with the very qualities ascribed by Exodus to the tree of Marah. Thus a tree which grows on the coast of Coromandel—the Nellimaram—sweetens bitter water. The missionary, Kiernander, tells us that a spring in the Mission garden having become bitter from want of rain, was made palatable by throwing into it a branch of this tree, and this is confirmed by another missionary, Sattler. The bottoms of newly dug wells are, indeed, floored with the Nellimaram, by the Tamulese, for the very purpose of keeping the water sweet. In Peru, also, there is a plant called Yerva by the Spaniards, which has the power of

¹ *Burckhardt and Wellsted*, quoted by Knobel, p. 160. *Seetzen's Reisen*, vol. iii. p. 117.

² *Ebers' Durch Gosen*, p. 117.

³ *Desert of the Exodus*, vol. i. p. 83.

purifying any water, however salt or bad, and making it drinkable. The people carry it with them whenever they travel any distance, to correct the unwholesomeness of the water on the road.¹

Breaking up² from Marah, the next station, two hours farther on, was Elim—"the trees"—so called from "seventy palms" which marked the presence of no fewer than twelve springs. This spot, so inviting to the Hebrews, is identified by most with the Wady Gharandel, only two and a half hours south of Huwarah or Marah. It is a broad hollow running north-east to south-west, from near the hill chain of El Raha to the sea, a distance of about twelve miles. It is, after that of the Wady Feirân, farther on, the largest oasis of the Sinai Peninsula, and is still famous among the Arabs for the abundance of its waters, though their estimate in such matters is that of Orientals, rather than one from Western or Northern standards. When Ebers visited the wady, in March, only shrunken threads of water, hardly deep enough to float a boy's paper boat, were visible; but, as he tells us, one needs only have wandered in the desert for a few days to appreciate the worth and charm of even such a spot. It had not rained for a length of time, so that the water did not reach the sea; but the Arabs said that it did so after wet weather. It tastes somewhat salt, but is drinkable. A few palms, mostly low

¹ Rosenmüller's *Morgenland*, vol. ii. p. 29.

² The rapidity with which a large Eastern encampment breaks up is wonderful. In quarter of the time which it would take a poor family in England to get the furniture of a single room ready for removal, the tents of a large encampment will be struck, and, together with all the movables and provisions, packed away on the backs of camels, mules, or asses, and the whole party will be on its way, leaving not a rag or a halter behind them. *Pictorial Bible*, vol. i. p. 87.

and bushy, with some tamarisks and acacias, ornament the valley, and strips of grass and herbage offer pasture for the camels of passing Arabs or travellers.¹ But vegetation seems to have been much more abundant in former times, for old travellers speak of it in glowing terms, dwelling on the many trees and the small copses it boasted, and especially noting the palms and numerous tamarisks; though the destruction of trees by the Arabs for ages had no doubt lessened the general richness which greeted the Hebrews. The soil and the limestone hills which bound the valley are, on the whole, however, now very bare. On the other side of the sea, dark, shattered, and verdureless, rise the boundary hills of Upper Egypt, while the Raha chain shuts in the view on the east. But, if even now, the valley be hailed by the Arabs as almost a Paradise, in comparison with the desert in which it lies, what must it have been 3,500 years ago to the weary and thirsty Hebrews?²

From Elim, where they probably rested a few days, the way led through the Wady Taijibeh, a comparatively pleasant valley sprinkled with tamarisks, bushes and palms, with the dwarf trunks and shaggy branches peculiar to their kind in this stony region.³ Water is found in wells, which have been sunk in past ages with great labour, but Seetzen heard of one spot with a rich

¹ Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 120.

² According to Niebuhr, after rain a powerful stream rushes down to the sea through it. (*Reisebesch.*, vol. i. p. 227.) Burckhardt says there is a copious spring with a small stream, and that the water is the best between it and Cairo. (*Syria*, p. 778). Robinson thinks, that though salt, it is not so disagreeable as that of Huwarah. The short distance from that place is nothing, for marches of nomades are determined by the water supply.

³ Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. p. 769.

spring and many date trees.¹ The road was hilly, and the view shut in on both sides; the limestone of the past changing, as the host advanced, into red and light



ARAB ENCAMPMENT IN THE WADY SHEIK. IN SINAI.

¹ Ebers says there is only a small spring of bad water. *Durch Gosen*, p. 124. Who will reconcile these contradictions?

yellow sandstone, which by its bright colour lends a striking character to the landscape. Eight hours from Gharandel they had reached the huge mountain mass of hard limestone, known perhaps ever since as "Pharaoh's bath;" a blunted pyramid rising in layers for 1,000 feet, and broader than its height; its sides so cleft, rent, worn, and naked, that it looks like the wreck of some giant conflagration.¹ Great gaps, larger and smaller, lead far inward, and mineral springs, heated in its depths and passing through the cracks and faults of the rocks which stretch towards the coast, come to light on the shore amidst clouds of steam, as hot springs, disagreeably salt in taste, but famous among the Arabs, as a cure for all ailments. The name, Pharaoh's bath, they say, records how Pharaoh, for his sins against the Hebrews, was thrown into the boiling cauldrons in the abysses under the hill, to suffer there in the scalding depths for ever. Before reaching it, the road had crossed Wady Useit, dotted with a few wild palms and a small pool of bad water; then on, through limestone hills, to Wady Thal, where the road forks east and west up other wadys to Wady Taijibeh. The host of the Hebrews, with their herds and waggons, now passed through a succession of plains shut in by naked white-yellow hills and rocky walls of sandstone, many of which in the distance seem like the work of man. Closing on all sides like an amphitheatre, they so surround the traveller, that he looks in vain for an exit; but as he advances, the way opens of itself after a long weary ascent. The road winds on thus from one plain to another, every short advance bringing a new view exactly similar to that just left. The shapes of the hills, indeed, vary, but as long as the sun is up the colours remain the same—yellow, grey, brown, and black; the

¹ Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 121.

only tints, as it appears, that nature has had to spare for this desert region. There is little verdure, and even the creatures which make these parts their dwelling, the camel, the hyæna, and the antelope, have the colour of the wilderness in which they are bred.¹ Mount Taijibeh, however, varies the landscape, rising in sloping beds of different colours; gold-yellow bearing on it great bands of red, then a broad belt of black, and this is crowned, finally, by a summit of yellow. Here, on the edge of the Red Sea,² amidst the sound of its waters, the tents of the Hebrews were once more pitched.³ Why they were led thus to the shore again we can only conjecture. Was it for the springs of fresh water for the host? Or to take advantage of the landing port from Egypt for the Sinai mining region, which might secure them many commodities, of which they would hereafter stand in need? Or was it to get food for the multitude, from the magazines, and from vessels in the harbour?⁴

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 126. So with the lion where it is found.

² Various supposed derivations of the name "Red Sea" have already been given, but the following, with which I have just met, seems to have special claims to notice. "As we emerged from the mouth of a small defile the waters of this sacred gulf (the Red Sea) burst upon our view; the surface marked with annular, crescent-shaped, and irregular blotches of a purplish red, extending as far as the eye could reach. . . . This red colour I ascertained to be caused by the subjacent red sandstone and reddish coral reefs. A similar phenomenon is observed in the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, and also near Suez, particularly when the rays of the sun fall on the water at a small angle."—The late Captain Newbold, in *Journ. of R. Asiatic Soc.*, No. xiii, p. 78.

³ Num. xxxiii. 10.

⁴ Ebers thinks that the number of men fit for war—600,000—given as that of the Hebrews at the Exodus, must be a corruption of the text, copied from one transcriber to the other. In explanation of his opinion he says, "In Goshen two millions of

The road from the seashore encampment led for some distance along the coast.¹ Leaving the high chalky

people—the gross number which 600,000 men presupposes—not including the Egyptians who lived among them, would have made a denser population than that of the kingdom of Saxony: in other words, it would not have been an agricultural, far less a pastoral people, but a manufacturing. “The whole area of Sinai,” he continues, “is about 2,000 square miles (English), so that if the Israelites had ever been equally distributed over it, which is not said, and naturally could not have been the case,—leaving out of the reckoning the resident tribes of Midianites, Amalekites, etc.,—the population to the square mile would have been 10 per cent. denser than in the Grand Duchy of Weimar.”*

“The water supply is another difficulty. Assuming that the Prussian military allowance of two Prussian quarts daily—equal to half a gallon—was required for each person, a quantity rather too small than too great in such a climate, 1,000,000 gallons would be required each day, or 18,518 hogsheds. But all the cattle, which were very numerous, had, besides, to be supplied. Allowing only 10 hours a day for water-drawing, a time so short as to be wholly unequal to the requirements, a spring would have needed to yield 28 gallons a second to supply the human wants, without reckoning those of the cattle. At the present time the Bedouins of the district are in serious trouble if a caravan of even a few hundred men draw water, in passing, from even their largest springs; lest they should exhaust it for the time.” But the populousness, in ancient times, of neighbouring districts, now well nigh as barren as Sinai, makes all these calculations of no real weight. See pp. 219, 332, 333.

As before said, moreover, the task of conquering Palestine demanded a very large force, and it is difficult to see how it could have been effected if the Hebrew immigration had only the small number of men which the diminution of the ordinary estimate, to any great extent, would imply. See p. 224.

¹ Palmer's *Explorations on Mount Sinai*, p. 19. Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 129. Holland, in *Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 533.

* At 11,500 square miles, the area of the Peninsula given by the Ordnance survey, 2,000,000 would give 174 to the square mile over the whole surface, counting the mountains as level ground.—Palmer's *Sinai*, p. 4. The 2,000 square miles of Sinai must refer only to the triangle of the Sinai mountains.

cliffs of Wady Taijibeh, with their blinding glare, the Hebrews would enter on the plain of El Markha, called in Exodus the wilderness of Sin, which runs along the strand—a desolate expanse of flints, gravel and sand, nearly destitute of vegetation, broken from time to time by equally desolate wadys opening on it from the interior. There is hardly any more dismal tract in the whole peninsula. Even in winter the heat is indescribable during the day, and it was now approaching the middle of the year. “From about nine till eleven in the morning of a bright day,” says Captain Palmer, “when the sun’s power is not yet tempered by a cooling sea breeze, travel is almost intolerable, especially to the new comer. Heat is everywhere present, seen as well as felt. The waters of the gulf, beautiful in colour—deep azure far out from land; slowly fading, as they near the shore, to the most delicate blue, are mirror-like—almost motionless—breaking on the beach only in a sluggish, quiet ripple. The sky, also beautifully blue, is clear, hot, and without a cloud; the soil of the desert is baked and glowing. The camel-men, usually talkative and noisily quarrelsome, grow pensive and silent—their fiercest wrangles hushed in the heat of a fiercer sun. The camels grunt and sigh, yet toil along under their burdens, in a resolute plodding way which one can scarcely understand. Even the Bedouins, usually indifferent to the sun’s rays, draw their thalebs, or white linen tunics, over their heads and shoulders, and tramp along under the lee of their camels; glad to avail themselves of the niggard scraps of shadow, which, though the sun is now approaching the meridian, the tall forms of these animals afford. When, at last, the sea breeze comes, one breathes a little more freely: the heat, though still great, feels less oppressive: clouds diversify

the sky : the sea breaks into life and motion, and all the conditions of the march improve.

“ Evening brings with it, however, the pleasantest part of the day, but the halt is followed by a scene of uproar and confusion which almost baffles description. The baggage camels, in nine cases out of ten, stoutly refuse, at first, to sit down to be unloaded, and each animal’s refusal is the signal for a savage onslaught from its master, aided by every available ally he can summon to the fray. The struggle that follows is desperate and noisy : the camels resist with a hideous series of unearthly snarling roars : the Bedouins swell the din by yells and screams, and curse everything they can think of ; especially, of course, the camel, who, perverse as he is, gives in at last.”¹ In the unchanging East this vivid picture, no doubt, answers in the main—if, instead of a caravan we imagine a countless host—to the scene as the Hebrews toiled wearily on, with their wives, children, multitudinous herds, and vast aggregate of baggage.

To add to the general distress, the stores of wheat, flour, and food of various kinds, brought from Egypt, which must have been enormous to have lasted so long, began to fail, in spite of any additions which may have been procured at their last station ; for it was now six weeks since they had crossed the Red Sea. Water had failed them before, and the intolerable agonies of thirst had raised murmurs against Moses. Famine now threatened, and in the presence of this new fear, the miracles of the past were forgotten. Fierce cries rose against both Moses and Aaron, and bitter regrets were heard on all sides that they had not stayed in slavery on the Nile, where they had had “ flesh pots, and bread to the full.”² It is hard for even the best of men to trust calmly

¹ Palmer’s *Explorations*, p. 20.

² Exod. xvi. 3.

in the Providence of God when all human resources are failing, and it must have been harder still for a mixed host like that of the Hebrews, to whom their very religion was new, to do so. They had not realized that since they were under the care of Jehovah Himself, they could never want. But flesh and bread were about to be supplied from sources they little imagined, for the evening saw a great flight of quails alight amidst the encampment, and on the next morning manna covered the ground far and near.

No great flocks of birds of any kind are found in the Sinai Peninsula, though Ebers, in the Wady Feirân, saw single birds, and among them our common starling.¹ Quails, however, not unfrequently pass over it in great migratory swarms, on their way from the interior of Africa, in the late spring, when the Hebrews encountered them, and they necessarily alight for rest. They fly, as a rule, in the evening,² and always before the wind,³ keeping near the ground⁴—birds of the earth rather than of the air, as Pliny remarks.⁵ Exhausted with their journey, they are easily killed with sticks, or caught in nets, or even by the hand.⁶ The Egyptian monuments

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 235.

² Exod. xvi. 13.

³ Ps. lxxviii. 26. Read "S. E. wind," for "E."

⁴ Our version, in Num. xi. 31, reads as if the quails were two cubits thick on the ground, one over the other. It should be "flying about two cubits above the ground." See Knobel, *Num.*, p. 56. Also, *Vulgate*. The *Targum of Onkelos* rightly says—"The wind bore them upon the camp as the breadth of a day's journey here, and a day's journey there, round about the camp, and as at a height of two cubits over the face of the ground." Dean Stanley suggests that instead of quails we should read storks, from the height above the ground, but the true sense shows the fancifulness of this explanation. The stork, also, is uneatable.

⁵ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, x. 33.

⁶ Furrer, in *Bibel Lex.*, vol. v. p. 626.

show such scenes, and the quails being snared by bird-catchers with nets and traps. They were eaten, in many cases, merely dried in the sun and salted, without being cooked—the monuments furnishing pictures of the process.¹ So plentiful indeed, were these birds at times, that a colony of wretched Egyptian offenders, mutilated by having the nose cut off, and banished to the mouth of Wady el Arish, on the coast between Egypt and Palestine, are recorded to have lived on them, by setting up nets made of split reeds, along the shore, to entangle them as they came, in clouds, tired and heavy, over the sea.² These swarms are in fact familiar in many parts of the East. In Palestine, and on the Euphrates, they are very common after the spring rains, and immense numbers of birds are caught for food and sale—their flesh being greatly prized.³ Their flight being weak, they instinctively select the shortest sea passages in their migrations, and avail themselves of any island as a resting place. Hence, in spring and autumn, on their way from Africa, and on their return to it, they are slaughtered in great numbers in Malta and the Greek islands, where they remain, each time, only a day or two. It was natural, therefore, that the Israelites should meet them in the desert of Sin, for they would follow the land in Africa till the Red Sea was narrowed by the projecting Sinai peninsula, and take advantage of it to cross to Asia. Indeed, vast flocks are known to visit the Sinai deserts, even now, at the time of migration. Tristram tells us that in Algeria, also, he has found the ground covered with them, over many acres, at daybreak, where, on the preceding afternoon, there had not been one. They

¹ Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 563. Rawlinson's *Herod.*, ii. 110.

² *Diodorus*, i. 60.

³ Hammer, *Gesch. d. Osmanischen Reiches*, 2te Auf. vol. i. p. 724.

were so fatigued, he adds, that they scarcely moved till almost trodden upon. He noticed the same phenomenon in Palestine, on a smaller scale—catching one with his hands, in the Jordan valley, while another was actually crushed by his horse's feet.¹

The supply of manna² has been variously explained; but though natural phenomena may indicate the direction in which miraculous aid was vouchsafed, they are inadequate, in their ordinary exhibition, to account for the whole facts recorded. One theory, which has met with favour from many, is that manna was simply the sugary exudation from the twigs of the tamarisk tree, which from the earliest ages has been called *man*, or *manna*, by the Arabs. The twigs, not the feathery leaves, distil a sweet, syrupy, honey-like substance, which falls in heavy drops, and is gathered by the Bedouins and put into leather bags, to be used, in part as a relish with their thin flat bread; partly for sale at Cairo, and to the monks of St. Catherine's convent at Sinai.

The tamarisk is richer in sap than almost any other growth of the Peninsula, retaining its greenness when everything else is withered by the fierce summer heat. Its "manna" exudes from punctures made by an insect in the tender skin of the twigs in spring. It flows most freely after heavy rain, but needs to be cleansed and prepared before being fit for food.

"White manna" is mentioned on the Egyptian monu-

¹ Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 231.

² The word manna seems to mean, primarily, "a gift" (from God), but that in no way excludes the play on it by the Hebrews, as was usual with them, by making it also mean "what is it?" which its form permits. *Man-hu* was also an Egyptian word for the manna of the tamarisk tree.

ments as a kind of vegetable food,¹ and was used both in offerings, and in the laboratory as a medicine; so that the substance has been known from the earliest times. The Bedouins still speak of it as "raining from heaven," because it falls from the trees with the dew. Like the true manna, it also lies on the ground like hoarfrost in the earliest morning. That there was dew when it fell, in the case of the Hebrews is, by the way, a proof that their camp was not in the arid wilderness, but where water and pasture existed. The appearance of "worms" in what was gathered, if kept too long, has been explained by that of the larvæ of the fly that produces the tamarisk manna, which ere long show themselves, if it be not cleansed by passing through a coarse cloth. Like that of the Bible, this manna looks like coriander seeds; tastes like honey, and melts in the sun.²

To the objection that the tamarisk manna is found only for a month or two in spring, Ritter answers that it is not said in the Bible to have fallen every day of the year, but was only an addition to the food of the Hebrews, who had, besides, dates,³ and flocks and herds, for milk and flesh,⁴ and doubtless bought food from the Amalekites, Midianites, and Ishmaelites who lived in the district, as they wished afterwards to do with the Edomites.⁵

As to the smallness of the quantity now obtained, Ritter says, very justly, that the produce of the few trees at present existing, cannot be taken as a measure of that which a probably much greater number yielded in the days of Moses. It is certain, indeed, that Sinai, in

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 226.

² Ritter, *Erdrkunde*, vol. viii. Absch. i. pp. 680 ff.

³ Exod. xv. 27.

⁴ Exod. xii. 38; xvii. 3.

⁵ Deut. ii. 6.

ancient times, was much more fertile than it has since become. "There is no doubt," says Dean Stanley,¹ "that the vegetation of the wadys has considerably decreased. In part this would be the inevitable effect of the winter torrents. The trunks of palm trees washed up on the shore of the Dead Sea, from which the living tree has now for many centuries disappeared, show what may have been the devastation produced among those mountains, when the floods, especially in earlier times, must have been violent to a degree unknown in Palestine; whilst the peculiar cause—the impregnation of salt—which has preserved the vestiges of the older vegetation there, has here, of course, no existence."

"Long before the children of Israel marched through the wilderness," says the Rev. F. W. Holland,² "the mines were worked by the Egyptians, and the destruction of trees was probably going on. It is hardly likely that the Israelites themselves would have passed a year in an enemy's country, knowing that they were to march onwards, without adding largely to this destruction. Their need of fuel must have been great, and they would not hesitate to cut down the trees, and lay waste the gardens; and thus, before they journeyed onwards from Mount Sinai, they may have caused a complete change in the face of the surrounding district.

"It is a well known fact that the rainfall of a country depends in a great measure upon the abundance of its trees. The destruction of the trees in Sinai has, no doubt, diminished the rainfall, which has also gradually been lessened by the advance of the desert, and decrease of cultivation on the north and north-west; whereby a large rain-making area has been gradually removed.

¹ *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 26.

² *Recovery of Palestine*, p. 513.

“In consequence, too, of the mountainous character of the Peninsula of Sinai, the destruction of the trees would have a much more serious effect than would be the case in most countries. Formerly, when the mountain-sides were terraced, when garden-walls extended across the wadys, and the roots of trees retained the moisture, and broke the force of the water, the terrible floods that now occur and sweep everything before them, would be impossible.

“In the winter of 1867 I witnessed one of the greatest floods that has ever been known in the Peninsula. I was encamped in Wady Feirân, near the base of Jebel Serbal, when a tremendous thunder-storm burst on us. After little more than an hour's rain, the water rose so rapidly in the previously dry wady, that I had to run for my life, and with great difficulty succeeded in saving my tents and my goods; my boots, which I had not time to pick up, were washed away. In less than two hours a dry desert wady, upwards of 300 yards broad, was turned into a foaming torrent, eight to ten feet deep, roaring and tearing down, and bearing everything before it—tangled masses of tamarisks, hundreds of beautiful palm-trees, scores of sheep and goats, camels and donkeys, and even men, women, and children; for a whole encampment of Arabs was washed away a few miles above me. The storm commenced at five o'clock in the evening; at half-past nine the waters were rapidly subsiding, and it was evident that the flood had spent its force. In the morning only a gently flowing stream, a few yards broad, and a few inches deep, remained. But the whole bed of the valley was changed. Here, heaps of boulders were piled up, where hollows had been the day before; there, holes had taken the place of banks covered with trees. Two miles of tamarisk wood, situated above the

palm groves, had been completely washed away, and upwards of 1,000 palm trees swept down to the sea.

“The fact is, that in consequence of the barrenness of the mountains, the water, when a heavy storm of rain falls, runs down from their rocky sides just as it does, in Britain, from the roofs of our houses. There is nothing in the valleys to check it, and so it gathers force almost instantaneously, and sweeps everything before it. The monks used formerly to build walls across the gullies leading down from the mountains; they planted the wadys with fruit trees, and made terraces for their gardens, and these checked the drainage and let it down by degrees, so that the storms in those days must have been comparatively harmless. The Amalekites and former inhabitants of the Peninsula, adopted probably the same means for increasing the fertility of their country.”

Fire, also, has played its part in making Sinai the desert it, in great part, now is; for a spark from the pipe of a Bedouin may destroy all the trees of a valley. Charcoal for local mining purposes must, moreover, have been required from the earliest ages, and have caused a terrible destruction of trees. Even now, indeed, that made from the acacia may be said to be the only traffic of the Peninsula.¹ Camels loaded with it are constantly met on the way between Cairo and Suez. Hence, in the valleys from which the acacia wood was readily procured by the Hebrews, for the building of the Ark and many other sacred uses, the tree is now utterly unknown.

The greater number of trees, formerly, would, moreover, not only increase the rainfall; the fertility of the region, thus caused, would attract a denser population than can now exist in these regions, and their care and

¹ *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 27.

labour would increase the vegetable richness of the district. Nor are indications wanting, both in the Sinai Peninsula and in the desert regions south of Palestine, of the presence of a far larger population than the present. The Egyptian mines created extensive intercourse with the Nile; and in Edom, and the southern wilderness of the Tih, remains of cities still prove that a traffic and bustle of human life, almost inconceivable at this day, once animated these now silent landscapes.

Yet, with every allowance for greater fertility over the Peninsula and the desert north of it in the time of Moses, we fear that the explanation of the supply of manna as having come from the tamarisk tree is wholly inadequate.

Another idea has, however, been advanced—that of its having been derived from the manna rains known in various countries. There is an edible lichen which sometimes falls in showers several inches deep, the wind having blown it from the spots where it grew, and carried it onwards. In 1824 and in 1828, it fell in Persia and Asiatic Turkey in great quantities. In 1829, during the war between Persia and Russia, there was a great famine at Oroomiah, south-west of the Caspian Sea. One day, during a violent wind, the surface of the country was covered with what the people called “bread from heaven,” which fell in thick showers. Sheep fed on it greedily, and the people, who had never seen it before, induced by this, gathered it, and having reduced it to flour, made bread of it, which they found palatable and nourishing. In some places it lay on the ground five or six inches deep. In the spring of 1841, an amazing quantity of this substance fell in the same region, covering the ground, here and there, to the depth of from three to four inches. Many of the particles were as large

as hailstones. It was grey, and sweet to the taste, and made excellent bread. In 1846 a great manna rain, which occurred at Jenischehr, during a famine, attracted great notice. It lasted several days, and pieces as large as a hazel-nut fell in quantities. When ground and baked it made as good bread, in the opinion of the people, as that from grain. In 1846 another rain of manna occurred in the government of Wilna, and formed a layer upon the ground, three or four inches deep. It was of a greyish white colour, rather hard, irregular in form, without smell, and insipid. Pallas, the Russian naturalist, observed it on the arid mountains and limestone tracts of the Great Desert of Tartary. In 1828, Parrott brought some from Mount Ararat, and it proved to be a lichen known as *Parmelia Esculenta*, which grows on chalky and stony soil, like that of the Kirghese Steppes of Central Asia. Eversmann described several kinds of it, last century, as found east of the Caspian, and widely spread over Persia and Middle Asia. It is round, and at times as large as a walnut, varying from that to the size of a pin's head, and does not fix itself in the soil in which it grows, but lies free and loose, drinking in nourishment from the surface, and easily carried off by the wind, which sweeps it away in vast quantities in the storms of spring, and thus causes the "manna rains" in the districts over which the wind travels.¹

It has been acutely remarked² that the description of manna in Exodus seems to imply that there were two kinds of it, since the same substance could not "be ground in mills or beaten in mortars" and yet "melt in

¹ Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. viii. Absch. i. pp. 680 ff. Macmillan's *Footnotes from the Page of Nature*, p. 104.

² Kalisch, *Exodus*, p. 214. Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. i. p. 170. Laborde's *Exodus and Numbers*, p. 97.

the sun." There would then be room for supposing that both the tree and the lichen manna may have played a part in the supply of the Hebrews; but, in any case, there were special features which imply miraculous agency. The quantity of manna now gathered in the Peninsula in the best season is not more than 600 or 700 pounds weight a year, and generally not more than a third of this quantity, so that no probable estimate of the greater fertility of the district in ancient times could suppose the production equal to the wants of the vast host of Israel. That which they enjoyed was nutritious and satisfying, whereas the tree manna is rather a condiment than a food, and was rightly classed by the Ancient Egyptians, for its effects on the body, as a drug, and kept, as such, in the medical storerooms found in all temples. That a double quantity fell on the sixth day, and none on the seventh, points,¹ moreover, to direct providential arrangements, and it certainly looks as if the tree manna, which has always been well known, could not have been so great a wonder to the Hebrews, as to have required a sample to be preserved to future generations.

The explanations of earlier writers have, at times, been very curious. Manna was supposed, for instance, to have been the dust of trees blown off by the air, or sweet vapours rising from them, and falling, when condensed by the dew, in a thick honey-like substance. Air manna was the name given to this fanciful creation.²

¹ The words "abide ye every man in his place on the seventh day," were held by one Jewish sect as a command that no one should move at all during the whole sabbath from the spot and position in which its commencement found him. Routh, *On Hegesippus*, R. S., vol. i, p. 225.

² See a long list of authorities in Rosenmüller's *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. ii. p. 34.

"The intense heat in Arabia," says Oedman, "draws a number of sweet juices from the trees and shrubs growing there, and the odours of these rise in the air and float so long as they are lighter than the atmosphere, but thicken as the evening cools, and fall with the dew in a sticky honey-like form." This theory is supported by authorities which are at least curious, however scientifically incorrect. Avicenna,¹ in his great book on medicine, describes manna as "a dew which falls on stones or plants, has a sweet taste, is of the thickness of honey, and hardens into a grainlike form." In another place he speaks of a kind of manna which is the vapour of trees and plants, undergoing a certain preparation in the air and falling like honey, at night, on trees and stones. In the same way Aristotle says, "Honey falls from the air, especially at the ascent of the larger stars, and when the rainbow is seen, but not before the rising of the Pleiades." Pliny, agreeing with this, writes, "From the rising of the Pleiades honey falls from the air, about day-break. At that time the leaves of the trees are found bedewed with honey, and any one early afoot has his clothes as it were anointed, and his hair ropy." Shaw, in strange keeping with these fancies, tells us that when travelling in Palestine, his bridle and saddle were one night covered with sticky dew. The monks at Sinai also speak of manna falling on the roof of their cloister, but this may be the manna of the tamarisk, carried by the air.

A number of trees, in fact, yield more or less of a sweet substance known as manna. Two kinds of ash in Sicily and Italy produce it; the camel's thorn of India, Egypt, Arabia, Northern Persia and Syria, is equally famous

¹ Born near Bokhara, A.D. 978. Died at Ecbatana, in Persia, A.D. 1036.

over these widely separate regions; the plant called gharb, which grows in the valley of the Jordan, yields what is called the Beiruk honey, and several kinds of oak, in different countries, have also a saccharine exudation, due to the punctures of the leaves by insects. All these sorts, which, however, are rather a form of sugar than any more substantial food, are gathered for use, but they throw little light, after all, on the manna of the Hebrews. The edible lichen seems in all respects most similar to the famous "heavenly bread" of Sinai and the wilderness,¹ but there is no record of its having been observed in the Peninsula of Sinai. Dean Stanley forcibly sums up the improbability of the tamarisk manna being that of Exodus: "An exudation like honey, produced by insects; used only for medicinal purposes; falling on the ground only from accident or neglect, and at present produced in sufficient quantities only to support one man for six months, has obviously but few points of similarity with the 'small round thing, small as the hoar frost on the ground; like coriander seed, white; its taste like wafers made with honey; gathered and ground in mills, and beat in a mortar, baked in pans and made into cakes, and its taste as the taste of fresh oil.' " In his opinion the manna of Kurdistan and Persia—the edible lichen, "far more nearly corresponds to the Mosaic account."² Vaihinger thinks that the tamarisk manna,

¹ Furrer thinks the tamarisk manna that of Exodus. *Bibel Lex.*, vol. iv. p. 109. So also does the author of the art. *Manna*, in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*. Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, pp. 223-247. Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, art. *Manna*. Ritter, *Erldkunde*, vol. xiv. pp. 665 ff. Mühlau and Volck, *Gesenius' Lex.*, 8te Auf. p. 473. Knobel, *Exodus*, p. 173. Captain Palmer thinks the quantity too small to have ever been of any moment, while, besides, it is only found in May and June. *Recent Explorations*, p. 24.

² *Sinai and Palestine*, vol. i. p. 28.

even if miraculously increased, would not satisfy the requirements of the sacred narrative. His closing remarks deserve quotation on various grounds. "All recent travellers," says he, "inform us that the whole peninsula has not at this time over 6,000 inhabitants, and maintain that its barren soil could not support many more. But as in the time of the Exodus there were Midianites in the south of it, and Amalekites in no small number lived in its northern parts, it seems hardly conceivable how a nation of 2,000,000 persons could find room in addition, and secure food. Yet this estimate of the Israelites is confirmed by two different reckonings,¹ which must certainly rest on old population rolls, and would be needed for the conquest of a country so thickly peopled and strongly fortified as Canaan. An increase of fertility to the extent of five-hundredfold must therefore be assumed during forty years, to explain the support of the Israelites, and, moreover, the tamarisk manna cannot be made into bread.

"If, besides, the number of Israelites at the Exodus is right, and we have no reason for doubting it: if the forty years' wandering in the wilderness be a historical fact; nothing remains but to regard the manna as a miraculous gift for the support of the Chosen People."²

¹ Exod. xii. 37. Num. i. 56; ii. 32; xxvi. 51.

² Vaihinger, in *Herzog*, vol. viii. p. 795. He, of course, believes in the forty years' wandering.





CHAPTER VIII.

STILL ON THE WAY TO SINAI.

THE road taken by the Hebrews after leaving the sea coast is so uncertain, that we cannot do better than follow the leading of so learned and interesting a guide as Professor Ebers. Leaving the barren sweep of the Desert of Sin, which stretches along the seashore to the very south of the Peninsula, the mountain system of Sinai was close before them in all its grandeur. Huge precipices and peaks of every form, in bands and masses of grey, red, brown, green, chalk-white and raven-black, rose on every side. It seemed as if "legions of evil spirits had united their strength and hostility to life, in piling up the hard, naked, desolate, barren cliffs, pinnacles, peaks, and perpendicular walls; to be alone amidst which would be to despair." Yet the spirit of gain had led men even here, for ages before Moses. It was the beginning of the mining district of the Ancient Egyptians. The route lay through Wady Maghara, past Wady Sidr, to Wady Mokatteb. Mighty walls of rock on both sides appeared to block up the way with masses hewn by Titans and heaped up one on the other. Red and black stones, broken as small as if by the hand of man, lay in great heaps, or strewed the path, which led imperceptibly upwards, through passes disclosing fresh land-

scapes, at the sight of which the pulses throbbed and a shudder ran through the frame. Countless pinnacles and peaks, cliffs and precipices, of every colour—white and grey, sulphurous yellow, blood-red and ominous black, rose anew in wild confusion and to vast heights.¹ Wady Maghara, a wide valley, closed in by two high and rocky mountains—the Ta Mafka of the Egyptians and the Dophkah² of the Hebrews, now opened before the host: its steep and lofty southern cliffs of dark granite; its northern, of red sandstone varied by a light brown. Here, for well nigh a thousand years before the days of Moses, the Egyptians had worked their treasured mines of copper and turquoise, a stone to which, even now the Arabs ascribe the power, when worn, of warding off misfortune, strengthening the eyesight, gaining the favour of princes, securing victory over enemies, and driving away bad dreams.³ In the midst of the valley rose a hill, surrounded by a wall, and crowned with small stone houses for the guard, the officers and the overseers; their only roofs a slight covering of palm branches brought from the Oasis of the Amalekites, which was near.⁴ On the highest peak of the hill, where it was most exposed to the wind, were the smelting furnaces, and a manufactory where a peculiar green glass was prepared, in imitation of emerald; that stone itself being found only more to the south, on the western shore of the Red Sea.

Inscriptions and rude sculptures, which still remain, show the extreme antiquity of these mines; the very oldest of which we have any record; dating further back than three thousand years before Christ.⁵ One group shows three figures bearing the royal crown; the

¹ Ebers' *Uarda*, vol. ii. p. 160.

² Num. xxxiii. 12.

³ *Durch Gosen*, p. 137.

⁴ *Uarda*, vol. ii. p. 162.

⁵ Ebers.

third holding fast, with his left hand, an enemy wearing a feather headdress, who kneels at his feet—the representative of the whole local population; the right hand being raised to strike the suppliant a deadly blow with an uplifted war-club. The Pharaoh thus portrayed, is Inefou, the last king of the ancient Third Dynasty; beside him is Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid.

After leaving Egypt the Hebrews had advanced leisurely, with abundant time for stragglers to regain the main body at each change of the encampment. They had rested and refreshed themselves at well-chosen spots, where the cattle could be watered, fed and cared for, and the flesh of slaughtered animals divided and cooked. How long the stay at each halting place had been is not told, but it must always have been more than one day, as it would have been impossible for the whole multitude to break up, and encamp afresh, daily. But, in spite of all the care of Moses, the region through which he was leading his people sadly dispirited them. The terrible Wilderness of Sin had been succeeded by landscapes of such almost unequalled desolation and wildness that even the Romans, in after ages, were appalled by their savage horrors, as of huge Alps, bared to their stony skeletons, with no display of verdure on their gloomy sides. Through such scenes the host had advanced; surrounded and pressed together by narrow defiles; the hanging rocks overhead apparently ready to topple down on them; stumbling over loose stones and wearily climbing up rocky paths; offering no green blade towards which the thirsty tongue of the cattle might stretch out; the herds of camels and cattle, and the flocks of sheep, blocking up the narrow gorges, and hindering the march of the men, women and children. The road they had thus passed had been terrible, but that which now

opened before them must have looked like the valley of death. They would have been more than human if they had been able to endure, without a murmur, experiences so different from those which they had fancied liberty would bring them.¹

Why should Moses have led them so terrible a road? The question can be answered only when we know whom, and what, the great leader expected to find at Dophkah.

Inscriptions still remaining show that the mines in this gloomy region were in full operation during the reign of Rameses II., the Oppressor, but none have been found of that of his successor, the Pharaoh of the Exodus; a fact which, together with the evident richness of the abandoned workings, seems to point to some external cause having led to their sudden stoppage.

Copper was very early known not only in Western Asia and Egypt, but also in Palestine.² Homer speaks of Sidon as "rich in copper," and the metal is mentioned no less than forty times in the Pentateuch, while iron is mentioned only twice, if we except the notices in Deuteronomy. In the book of Job we are told

"There is a vein for the silver,
And a place for gold, which they refine;
Iron is taken out of the earth,
And they melt stone into copper.
Man sinketh a shaft far from a sojourner;³
There the forgotten live, away from the feet of passers by;
Away from man they hover⁴ on the rocks."

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 149.

² Möver's *Phönizier*, vol. ii. p. 66.

³ Far from human dwellings.

⁴ Job xxviii. 2-4. An obscure passage. The rendering given is combined from Delitzsch, Dillmann and Merx.

In the City of the Dead at Memphis, many bronze and copper articles are found, which, like the mines of the Wady Maghara, date as far back as the time of the pyramids; and, indeed, the wondrously fine hewing of the blocks of stone by the builders of these structures; the delicate sculptures in relief in the graves of Gizeh; and, especially, the almost matchless statues of Cephrenes, the builder of the Second Pyramid, cut out of the hardest breccia, would have been impossible without metal tools.¹

The condition of the miners in the torrid and desolate Egyptian workings at Sinai was sad in the extreme; for "to work in the mines" had as ominous a meaning to the population of the Nile, as it now has in Russia when spoken of the mines of Siberia. Many notices on the monuments cast a dismal light on the horrors of those condemned to this fate, but a still more vivid picture of them has been left us by an old Greek writer, who describes, from personal knowledge, the misery of the labourers in the gold mines which lay on the boundaries of Egypt and Nubia, between the Nile and the Red Sea.²

"The kings of Egypt," says he, "send to the gold mines condemned criminals, prisoners of war, and persons convicted on false accusation, or banished in the heat of passion. By this means they procure the labour necessary to obtain the great treasures these mines yield; the punishment being often extended not only to the offender,

¹ Ebers thinks these must have been of copper, which he assumes to have preceded iron, as childhood does manhood. But Dr. Dahn, on the other hand, proves that iron is often found earlier, not only than copper, but even than bronze. *Urgeschichte der Germanischen Völker*, 1881, vol. i. p. 4.

² Agatharcides (about B.C. 150), quoted by *Diodorus Siculus*, iii. 12, 13, 14.

but to all related to him. The number of the convicts is very great, and they are all chained by foot irons, and have to work continually, without an interval for rest. Not only is there no break of work for them by day: the very night brings them none, and, withal, every chance of escape is cut off from them; for foreign soldiers, whose language they do not understand, are set over them, so that no one can move his guard by friendly words or entreaties. Where the gold-bearing soil is hardest, huge fires are kindled to loosen the ground, before the miners begin to dig; but as soon as the rock is burnt enough to require less violent labour, many thousands of the unfortunates are set to break it up with quarry tools. The oversight of the whole work is under the charge of a skilled officer, who knows the difference between rich and poor stone, and directs the toilers accordingly. The strongest drive shafts into the rocks; not in a straight line, but as the glittering metal may lead, and these shafts wind and turn so that the hewers have to work with a lamp on their forehead, else they would be in total darkness. They have, moreover, constantly to change their position as the rock demands, till finally they get the pieces broken off and thrown down on the floor of the galleries. Meanwhile, the overseers keep them up to this heavy task by roughness and blows.

“The boys who have not yet come to their strength, have to go into the shafts in the rocks, and painfully raise and drag out to the open day, the pieces of stone broken off by the miners. From these lads, men, who must be over thirty years of age, receive each a fixed quantity of this quarried metal, and have to pound it in stone troughs, with iron pestles, till it is no larger than a pea.

“The wives and the old men then take these fragments

and pour them into mills, of which a number stand in a row, and these are driven by two or three persons, by a winch, till the whole is ground as fine as flour. One cannot look at these wretched creatures, who not only are unable to keep themselves clean, but are too ragged even to hide their nakedness, without lamenting their fate. For there is no care or pity for the sick, the injured, the grey-headed, or for the weakness of woman. All, driven by blows, must work on till death comes to end their sufferings and their sorrows. In the bitterness of their agony, the condemned anticipate the future as even more horrible than the present, and wait eagerly for death, which is more fondly desired than life. The discovery of these mines dates from the earliest times: they must have been begun, already, under the old kings."

The explorations of Major Palmer have, in recent years, helped vividly to illustrate some details of this sad narrative. In the little Wady Umm Themâim, he discovered the mouth of a mine a short way up the face of the hill, and on entering found himself in a labyrinth of narrow winding galleries, leading about 400 feet into the rock. Most of these were so low that he had to creep on his hands through them, and a safe return was only secured by the precaution of unwinding a cord as he advanced, to mark his proper course in getting out again. The air was oppressive in the extreme, for there was no ventilation; the fresh outer atmosphere finding no entrance to the depths of the mountain; bats, moreover, flew out in great numbers, entangling themselves in his hair and beard. The walls of the galleries were still black with the smoke of the lamps used, ages before, by the miners, and a wooden prop was found which had supported the roof of some side gallery "perhaps before the building of the First Pyramid:" for so old were

the workings that even the hieroglyphics at their mouth were well nigh worn away by time.¹

It will be noticed that not only persons obnoxious to the Pharaoh, but their whole families and connections; children, men, wives, and old people, were banished to the mines; and it may readily be conjectured that this convict population was recruited, in the time of Rameses II. and his successor, from the troublesome elements in the Delta. Indeed, great numbers of Hebrews of all classes, with their families, must have been thus put out of the way; and among those thus banished to worse than death, it may well be that friends and relatives of Moses himself, condemned after his flight to Midian, might be found.

The mines were, in fact, even in the times of the Roman emperors, the equivalent of our penal settlements, or rather of the French Bagnios; since the condemned worked in chains. In the famous porphyry quarries between the Nile and the Red Sea, the miners were exclusively persons sentenced to this fate, and included not a few noble elements, such as the multitude of Christian confessors banished by Diocletian to these wretched places.

In the same way, as before noticed, Manetho's account of the Exodus informs us, that Menephtah (Amenophis) ordered all the lepers and other unclean persons to be brought together from all Egypt—80,000 in number—and sent to the stone-quarries east of the Nile, to work there, apart from the Egyptian convicts. There were, we are told, some learned men among these unfortunates—priests infected with "leprosy." It is to be remembered, moreover, that Manetho names a priest of On—Osarsiph or Moses—as chosen by these "unclean" as their

¹ Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, pp. 196 ff.

leader. The quarries, however, were probably not the only place to which these outcasts were sent, or perhaps not even the real one, but that the mines of Sinai had their share. Indeed, the mention of the quarries on the Nile seems only a later invention, in keeping with the wild confusion of places and dates which marks the story.

That these so-called lepers were no other than the Hebrews, admits of little doubt. Those who were obnoxious to the Egyptians, either from neglecting the sanitary laws so strictly enforced on the Nile, or from opposing the religion of the country, were habitually branded as leprous. It is, moreover, beyond question, as already stated, that leprosy was actually brought by the Hebrews from Egypt.

We may fairly conclude, therefore, from what we know of the policy of the Pharaohs in deporting all who incurred their suspicion or displeasure, to the mines of Sinai, with their families and connections, that Moses would find there great numbers of his people, whom he could free from their terrible sufferings, and carry off with him into liberty.

The route by the mines would be the more practicable since, even in the absence of springs, there was doubtless a supply of water for the miners, in huge tanks excavated in the rock. In a curious Ancient Egyptian plan of the gold mines, now preserved at Turin, such a reservoir occurs, and an inscription found at Kukan, on the Nile, informs us that Rameses II. took care to provide one on the road to them. He had heard that much gold was to be had in the district, but that the drivers and their asses perished from thirst on the way. The head men of the part were therefore summoned, and being asked how this could be prevented, returned an answer which, curiously enough, ascribes to him, in high

oriental flattery, the power of working the very miracle which Moses wrought with his rod :—"Thou commandest the water—'Flow over the rocks'—and an ocean hurries forth in obedience to thy word." Nor is this the only case in which similar care for the provision of water, in like circumstances, is mentioned. In the very region of the Sinai mines, in Wady Maghara, there is a tablet cut on the rocks, which shows the Pharaoh Rathoures, of the Fifth Dynasty, with a great vessel at his side from which water is streaming out; the word "Life" being thrice repeated, and an inscription, written above, "The Lord of the Mountains. He brings here the gift of water." The figure of the Pharaoh himself is accompanied by words which illustrate the awe in which the monarchy of Egypt was held by its subjects! Thrice over he is styled "*The great god*, the lord of both lands, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt."

This tablet was cut in memory of a victorious military expedition of a division of the army of Rathoures against "the Bedouin tribes of Sinai," and also as a grateful recognition of his care for the supply of water for the miners and the Egyptian force that watched them. Traces of the reservoirs he provided are, indeed, still to be seen at the garrison post.

The expectation of freeing a large number of his countrymen from a dismal fate, and at the same time, the knowledge that he would find water for his host in the huge cisterns on the route, the shortest to Sinai—perhaps, also, the belief that he would secure supplies of various kinds in the magazines provided for the wants of the miners and of the garrison, may well have induced Moses to pass through Dophkah. The small Egyptian force, which a tablet of the Twelfth Dynasty¹ informs us

¹ Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, vol. ii. p. 137.

was at that time only 738 men strong, could give no effective resistance, and in all probability withdrew before the vast host of the Hebrews, to join the neighbouring hostile Arab tribes, and offer, in their company, at a later time, a front to the invaders.¹

From Dophkah the road to Sinai lay in a direct line through Wady Mokatteb and Wady Feirân; the former



ENTRANCE TO WADY MOKATTEB. Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*.

famed, though many centuries past, for the inscriptions from which it has received its name.²

The wady, at first broad, gradually narrows into a ravine, on the west side of which, almost exclusively,

¹ For the curious information respecting the mines I am indebted in great part to Ebers. *Durch Gosen*, pp. 141-161.

² Mokatteb = "The written."

these inscriptions are found. None of them, whether in Sinaitic (Nabathæan), Greek, Coptic, or Arabic, are cut into the rock to any depth or with any care. Even the best are only scratched on the surface, some so lightly that it seems as if a nail, a knife, or a flint, had been used rather than a chisel. Beside many are outlines of animals and other objects, but the artistic skill of these is on a par with the rude designs on the house-doors of the Fellahs, or those of children in their first attempts at drawing, and indeed are such as only infantile minds could condescend to execute. Armed and unarmed men; laden and unladen camels; horses, with and without riders and leaders; long-horned antelopes; stars and crosses, have been in special favour with the creators of this strange gallery; but there are also ships, fish, and such elementary hunting scenes as a dog chasing an antelope.

These inscriptions date, apparently, from a few centuries before and after Christ; some of them the work, it may be, of heathen; others, without doubt, of Christians of the earliest centuries of our era. Already, in the sixth century¹ Cosmas Indicopleustes speaks of them as memorials of the passage of the Jews from Egypt, and thinks the characters in which they are written a proof, in Hebrew, of the truth of the Bible narrative. Similar inscriptions are found more or less frequently over the whole of Arabia Petræa, as far as Egypt on the west, and the Hauran on the north-east. But they are most abundant in the Sinai Peninsula, where their similarity in the most widely separated wadys, even those most off the ordinary lines of travel, seems to show they were the work of the resident tribes. The exact resemblance of the written characters employed, to those on the

¹ About A.D. 535.



VIEW IN THE WADY MOKATTEB.

coins¹ of the Nabathæan princes who resided in the rock-city of Petra, between the Dead Sea and the branch of the Red Sea which bounds the Sinai Peninsula on the east, has also been noticed as a proof of their local origin.

That they were, however, in all cases the work of people who, though local, were yet unsettled, is shown in various ways. They are found in the greatest numbers precisely where persons on a journey could find shade: they are always so low that they can be reached without difficulty from the ground, and they have been thrown off so carelessly that the rock has hardly in any case been smoothed to prepare for them. Had the writers lived on the spot, they would have spent more time on the stony memorials by which they sought to immortalize themselves, and would not have been satisfied with scratches that would long ago have been illegible but for the dryness of the air and the heat, which have not only preserved the stone wonderfully, but, in many places covered it, as it were, with a glassy coating. Men do not care, moreover, to perpetuate their names where they habitually live, but rather at spots which they only visit for a time.

Already, in the fourteenth century before Christ, the great Rameses chiselled his name and his likeness on the mountain walls of the lands he had conquered. Mercenaries of Psammetichus I.,² who had journeyed to the second cataract, carved their names on the leg of one of the colossi which keep guard over the temple of Abu-Simbel; on the great Sphinx of Gizeh; on the walls of the famous tombs near Thebes, and on many other similar places; just as in the Written Wady of Sinai, hundreds of Greek and Roman travellers have

¹ The earliest of these coins date from B.C. 151 to 146.

² B.C. 664-610.

inscribed mementoes of themselves, in prose and verse, often along with their names. It was, thus, the whim of antiquity, as much as of to-day, to leave some record of one's self in passing noted scenes.

The fact that nearly all the Sinai inscriptions refer to a wandering life, strengthens the grounds for referring them to a similar origin. Outlines of laden camels, ships, men with staves in their hands, and gazelles, the symbol of the desert, occur most frequently. Other representations point to special circumstances which caused many to make this valley the limit of their journey. It is also noticeable that the inscriptions follow certain directions. The chief stream flows, as it were, towards Mount Serbal; another, much feebler, towards Mount Sinai; a third, towards the rock-city Petra, and a fourth is found in the Hauran. But the Wady Mokatteb must have had especial attractions, for its sides show an unwonted number of inscriptions.

The first step towards the understanding of these strange records was made by Professor Beer, of Leipsic, in the year 1840, by the discovery of the value of some of the signs. But Beer died soon after this feat, leaving it to be followed to noteworthy results by others. In 1849, Professor Tuch, also of Leipsic, following the hints thus given, was able to show that the authors of the inscriptions were mostly heathen Arabs, who had perpetuated their names when on a pilgrimage to the holy places of their Sabæan worship—Sinai, Serbal, and the Wady Feirân. The ancient Arabs worshipped the sun and moon, and also the brightest of the stars, preferring the tops of the highest mountains for sanctuaries, as nearest to their god Baal—the sun. Their primitive temples were only some stones of special shape, laid rudely on each other, but they also liked to pray under

the shade of broad spreading trees, which seemed an emblem of the moon goddess, who sent fruitfulness and prosperity. To such a religion the authors of the inscriptions belonged, for many of them describe themselves as "Servants," "Fearers," or "Priests" of the Sun-god, Baal, and of the Moon. Among all the names, moreover, numerous though they be, not one, according to Tuch, is Christian or biblical. But in this he differs from other scholars.

The Christian crosses and signs which accompany many inscriptions, seem either to be more recent additions, or the work of the latest pilgrim visitors, who had embraced Christianity, but still retained the use of the Nabathæan writing.

Tuch thinks that the inscriptions date from the centuries immediately preceding the spread of Christianity over the Sinai Peninsula, and that the language in which they are written is an Arabic dialect, with some Aramaic words. Levy, a Professor at Breslau, on the other hand, contends that they are written in Aramaic, but show signs of Arabic influence; but, after all, Aramaic and Arabic may be called dialects of a common speech. He thinks most of them date from the century before Christ, and that the latest must be as old as the fourth century of our era. "The idea in the mind of the writers," says he, "may have been that such inscriptions would keep them always, as it were, before the gods, and secure their permanent favour. To make this the surer, they often added rude pictures of themselves, perhaps with some detail of their personal surroundings; and thus, it may be, we have at the side of an inscription, the outlines, sometimes of the individual alone; at others, with the accompaniment of a camel or horse, as if to make him be remembered more easily."

Palmer's hypothesis seems to have much to recommend it as an explanation of the numbers of inscriptions found in Wady Mokatteb. He thinks that a great Arab fair must have been held periodically there. To this Ebers adds the idea that it may have been the scene, from time to time, of a great religious or national feast, like those which still take place among the local Arabs. Palmer describes such a great national feast of the Bedouins, at which games, races of camels, and rejoicings of all kinds took place. In old times, such a gathering, held in this wady, would bring together the population from all parts; uniting as it would, like similar occasions now, the attractions of a large fair or market, to those of popular amusements and spectacles, and religious observances.

The inscriptions in Greek are of as little value as the Nabathæan. According to Ebers, some show heathen, some Christian names. Beside that of a Deacon Job, a soldier, who evidently had a poor opinion of Christians, has written, "A poor set of trash these. I, the soldier, have written this all with my own hand."¹

Alush, the next camping place of the Hebrews,² may have been near a spring which bubbles up not far from the entrance to Wady Feirân, where the mountains and the ground show a strange variety of colours; red predominating so greatly that many of the ridges and lower elevations look at a distance like fallen brick walls.

Wady Feirân, itself, with its background of distant

¹ *Durch Gosen*, pp. 165-179.

² Num. xxxiii. 13. Alush, in the *Targumists*, means "a crowd of men." Knobel (*Exodus*, p. 162), followed by the *Speaker's Commentary*, thinks the Hebrews avoided Wady Feirân, but Ebers leads them through it.

peaks is, in many parts, like the valleys of the Alps, where the pinnacles rise barest and most abruptly to the heavens, seeming to forbid approach. Inviting, above other valleys of Sinai, as it advances, its entrance is destitute of any other vegetation than the poor growth of the wilderness, and the dark green leaves of the Coloquintada, with its bright golden orange-like fruit. But the outward similarity is all, for it is at once very bitter and in some degree poisonous, though used by the Arabs, in small quantities, as a drug.

A sketch by Ebers of this part of his route brings the landscape and its people vividly before us. "On the following morning," says he, "we broke up very early. The fires of our Arabs were still burning when the camels were loaded, and the last quarter of the waning moon stood in full splendour in the heavens. It was cold and quite dark when we began our march. But red light soon showed itself in the east, then golden stripes; the air growing colder as the day approached. Yet this was very soon over, for the night turned to day wondrously fast, and as the pale sickle of the moon faded before the flaming disk of the sun, the cold gave way to heat." Ere long he had a glimpse of young life in the wady, such as, in these unchanging regions, it may have shown itself in the days of Moses.

"We had far outmarched the camels, and were awaiting them under the shadow of a rock, when two Bedouin girls, with the back of their heads veiled, but their faces bare, came near. The one was specially attractive; with great black eyes, that looked out astonished into the world; a fine nose, and teeth like veritable pearls, which shone out in two rows of radiant white amidst the golden brown of her complexion. The second, though less charming, was more lively than her sister, and like her

wore only a blue cotton veil and a poor tunic of the same stuff, which reached to the knees, leaving her slender legs and small ankles and feet exposed. As soon as they saw us they left their brown goats and hid behind a rock.

“Calling them, and holding out a few piastres, the plainer one ventured first to come near us, then the other. Eager to get the proffered gift, they held out their slender but well-formed arms for it, but would not venture to take it, lest we should touch them with our ‘unclean’ hands. When at last, however, we had thrown the piastres so far that they had no fear of us, one of our Arabs came in sight, and, instantly, both the girls, climbing the steep rocks on the left, were off out of sight so swiftly that they might really well be compared to gazelles. It seems that they could hardly hope to get husbands if they had approached a stranger; and they would, moreover, have had to bear reproaches and blame from their parents.”¹

In one of the side valleys close by, Palmer found a rock which the Arabs venerate as that from which Moses brought forth the waters miraculously.² It is surrounded with heaps of little stones, which lie also on each fragment in its immediate neighbourhood, and has the following legend connected with it. When the children of Israel had encamped beside the wondrous stream, and were resting after they had quenched their thirst, they amused themselves by throwing small stones on the rocks before them. Hence rose a custom of doing the same, which the Arabs still keep up to preserve the memory of the miracle. They think it makes Moses especially friendly, and in this belief, any one who has a sick friend throws

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 183.

² Exod. xvii. 6, 7. Massah = temptation. Meribah = chiding.

a small stone in his name, confident that the sufferer will soon get better through this being done.¹

A detached rock in the south-east of Jebel Mûsa, which has some curious fissures and weather markings, has also been claimed as the rock smitten by Moses. It is an insulated block of granite about 12 feet high, and of an irregular shape. Some apertures on its surface, about twenty in number, are said to be those from which the water issued. They lie nearly in a straight line round three sides of the stone, and are for the most part 10 or 12 inches long, 2 or 3 inches broad, and from 1 to 2 inches deep, though a few are as deep as 4 inches. As to their character, Burckhardt says, "Every observer must be convinced on the slightest examination, that most of them are the work of art, though three or four may be natural, and may first have drawn attention to the stone, and have induced the monks to call it the rock of the miraculous supply of water. But not only are the holes themselves evidently artificial; the spaces between them have been chiselled to imitate the action of water on the stone, though it cannot be doubted that if water had flowed from the fissures, it must generally have taken quite a different direction. The neighbouring Arabs venerate it highly, and put grass into the fissures as offerings to the memory of Moses, in the same way as they put grass on the tombs of their saints, because it is to them the most precious gift of nature, and that on which their existence chiefly depends."²

¹ Palmer's *Wilderness of the Exodus*, p. 159.

² The Rev. Canon Norris, *Bible Educator*, vol. i. p. 157, adds to the miracle which actually took place, that "a perpetual running river followed the Israelites in all their forty years wanderings; not running up hill, as some have absurdly said, but

A curious passage from the geologist Fraas,¹ deserves notice in this connection: "A sharp eye sees at the foot of Horeb, at a moderate height above the valley, on the smooth bare wall of rock, a number of green spots, some higher than others." Having climbed to one of them on the east of the mountain, Fraas adds, "a granite wall rose perpendicularly from the débris below. A fig tree at its foot is first seen, but as one approaches, shrubs and verdure show themselves, quickened by a small basin of water fed from a spring close at hand. This runs from the smooth face of the rock, about breast high, with the fulness of a good sized well-pipe. But on looking more closely, the opening through which it burst out proved to be artificial. No traces can be seen of water elsewhere in the mountain wall, to betray the presence of a spring thus previously hidden behind the granite. On the whole face of the rock, in its height of forty feet, only crystals of felspar glitter, showing no indications of the water behind. The spring has been struck out of the rock by a human hand; a circumstance which reminds

doubtless renewed at the head of every valley which they entered, making every wady a watercourse for the time, and only ceasing when they reached Kadesh Barnea, the northern limit of their wandering." But the plain of Horeb is 4,000 feet above the sea, while the course of the Israelites was alternately a descent and an ascent, first to the seashore, and then, by a series of steep ravines, to elevation after elevation in the Negeb or South Country. Nor was Kadesh the northern limit of their march, for they went beyond Hormah, which is considerably north of it; and, moreover, they had no water at Meribah, near Mount Hor. All this is only the result of a misconception of St. Paul's allegory, in which Christ, under the figure of a "spiritual Rock," is said to have followed Israel through the wilderness.*

¹ *Aus dem Orient*, 1867, p. 23.

* 1 Cor. x. 4. See Meyer.

a geologist acquainted with the Bible, of Moses, the great student of the hills and of man, who struck a rock on Horeb and the water flowed from it." I give the passage as it stands, leaving its value to the estimate of the reader.

In entering Wady Feirân from the west the mountains are of sandstone, brown-red granite, and dark porphyry, varied by green and greyish yellow rocks, which hem in the wanderer. Underfoot there is nothing but sand. After a time, however, the thorny and scant growth of the wilderness begins to be more abundant and stronger, and the sight of shrubs indicates the nearness of water and fertility. Presently an oasis opens, and the eye rests on leafy palms, delicately feathered tamarisks, blooming acacias, and dwarf apple trees, the haunt of birds. On the left, on the edge of a small stream, are the first Bedouin gardens one sees in the Peninsula; on the right, the remains of stone houses; and, farther on, the slight huts of settled Arabs, surrounded by green. Light hedges fence the small gardens; children play before the doors; the barking of dogs sounds warningly; and sheep feed on patches of grass, sprinkled with white and blue flowers. The farther one advances, the loftier are the palms, the more numerous the leafy trees, and garden follows garden in pleasant succession. The clear water of a full stream flows silently down the valley. For a good half-hour the march passes eastward amidst a delightful scene. After a time, however, it changes, and Mount Serbal, believed by many to be the Mountain of the Law, rises in awful majesty, closing in the view.

Various points in this great centre of the mountain system of the Peninsula have had the honour ascribed to them of being that from which the law was spoken. Ebers decides for Serbal; but his verdict, we fear, can

hardly be accepted after the more thorough study of the region by Major Palmer. His description of Serbal, however, well merits quotation: "Mighty and sublime, a great master-work of Him who created the earth and the worlds, the giant peaks of Serbal, on which Moses prayed, rise to heaven from their vast foundations. How imposing its naked, stony, immense height! The sun sank to rest. The lower pinnacles, towards the west, gleamed with pure gold, while the lofty, jagged granite tops of the holy mountain were bathed in violet, red, and yellow vapour. The resplendent golden orb of the sun disappeared behind the summit, with its crown of five peaks, and the pinnacles of the giant diadem glowed in colours never to be forgotten. Every line of the rocks, high up in the ether, was hung with garlands of purple-rose and gold-opal, and while these shone wondrously, the sun once more appeared, to sink again to rest behind the lower mountains. The streaming glory round the profile of Serbal now faded, and its peaks and pinnacles began to shine with a delicate transparent red, tender as that of a lady's fingers held in the night against a bright light. Finally the colours died away, and when the stars came out, and the mountain drew over itself a black robe, its mass was so great that it conquered the darkness, and the majestic height could still be seen in its outlines."¹

Mount Serbal is undoubtedly the most magnificent mountain in the Peninsula. "Serbal is a vast mass of peaks," says Dean Stanley, "which, in most points of view, may be reduced to five, the number adopted by the Bedouins. All of granite, they rise so precipitously, so column-like, from the broken ground which forms the root of the mountain, as at first sight to appear in-

¹ *Durch Gosen*, p. 207.

accessible. But they are divided by steep ravines, filled with fragments of fallen granite. . . . The summit of the highest peak is a huge block of granite, on which, as on the back of some petrified tortoise, you stand and overlook the whole Peninsula of Sinai. . . . On the northern and somewhat lower eminence are the visible remains of a building which may be of any date, from Moses to Burckhardt. A point of rock immediately below this ruin was the extreme edge of the peak. It was flanked on each side by the tremendous precipices of the two neighbouring peaks,—itself as precipitous,—and as we saw them overlooking the circle of desert, plain, hill, and valley, it was impossible not to feel that for the *giving* of the law, to Israel and to the world, the scene was most truly fitted. I say, ‘for the *giving* of the law,’ because the objections urged from the absence of any plain immediately under the mountain, for *receiving* the law are unanswerable, or could only be answered if no such plain existed elsewhere in the Peninsula.”¹

Besides the authority of Ebers, Mount Serbal has in its favour, as the Mountain of the Law, the support of the earliest traditions, for it was undoubtedly identified with Sinai by all known writers, to the time of Justinian, as confirmed by the position of the episcopal city of Paran at its foot.² Among modern investigators its claims are maintained by Burckhardt and Lepsius. But as there is no plain near it of sufficient size to offer camping ground to more than a fraction of so large a host as that of the Hebrews, it would have been impossible for them to have approached it, or to have seen from below the awful splendours of the descent of God on its summit.

The traditional Mount Sinai, however, twenty-five miles to the south-east by the nearest road, advances

¹ *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

rival claims in favour both of its southern heights,—Jebel Mûsa, the hill of Moses,—and of its northern face, known as Ras Sasâfeh, which is now generally considered as best meeting the requirements of the Bible narrative. An ascending pass, amidst masses of rock, with a thread of water for the most part just visible, but here and there forming clear pools shrouded in palms, leads from Wady Feirân to the second and highest stage of the great mountain labyrinth, of which Jebel Mûsa, 7,363 feet above the sea, is the centre.¹ It is one of a cluster of gigantic mountains forming a mighty altar about three and a half miles long, nearly north and south, by about one and a half from east to west: the whole, known traditionally as Mount Sinai.

Jebel Mûsa was held by Ritter² to be the Holy Mountain, and has for ages been consecrated as such by monkish legends and traditions, embodied as it were in the convents on its sides, still famous for their colonies of Greek ascetics. The ascent of the mountain lies between vast heights and rocks, of the wildest and grandest character. The view from the summit comprehends a vast circle. Mount Sinai itself, and the hills which compose the district in its immediate vicinity, rise in sharp isolated conical peaks. From their steep and shattered sides huge masses have been splintered, leaving fissures rather than valleys between their remaining portions. These form the highest part of the range of mountains spread over the Peninsula, and in the winter months are very generally covered with snow, the melting of which occasions the torrents which everywhere devastate

¹ Serbal rises 6,734 feet above the sea (Palmer's *Sinai*, p. 168).

² *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. p. 593. D'Israeli—Lord Beaconsfield—has a highly wrought chapter on Jebel Mûsa, in his *Tancred*, book iv. chap. 7.

the plains below. No villages and castles, as in Europe, animate the picture. No forests, lakes, or falls of water break the silence and monotony of the scene. All has the appearance of a vast and desolate wilderness, either grey, or darkly brown, or wholly black. Few who gaze from the fearful height of the summit, upon the dreary wilderness below, will fail to be impressed with the fitness of the whole scene for the sublime and awful dispensation of the law given to Moses.¹ "The view from Jebel Mûsa," says Henniker, "where the particular aspect of the infinite complication of jagged peaks and varied ridges is seen in the greatest perfection, is as if Arabia Petrea were an ocean of lava, which, while its waves were running mountains high, had suddenly stood still."² But the absence of any plain at its foot is as fatal to its claims as to those of Serbal. There is no "brook that descended out of the mount,"³ and the wady near is so rough, uneven, and narrow, that there seems no possibility of the people's "removing" and "standing afar off"⁴ without their entire exclusion from the scene.

The modern Horeb of the monks, the north-west and lower face of the Jebel Mûsa, crowned with a range of magnificent cliffs, of which the highest point is known as Ras Sasâfeh,⁵ has been very generally held, since it was first named for the honour by Robinson, as the true scene of the giving of the law. The best description of its features is that of Dean Stanley: "After winding through the various basins and cliffs which make up the range, we reached the rocky point overlooking the approach by which we had come the preceding day

¹ Wellsted's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 97.

² *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 12.

⁴ Exod. xx. 18.

³ Deut. ix. 21.

⁵ The Willow Head.

The effect on us, as on every one who has seen and described it, was instantaneous. It was like the seat on the top of Serbal, but with the difference, that here was the deep wide yellow plain sweeping down to the very base of the cliffs; exactly answering to the plain on which 'the people removed and stood afar off.' Considering the almost total absence of such conjunctions of



RÂS SASÂFEH, FROM THE PLAIN.—Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*.

plain and mountain in this region, it is really important evidence of the truth of the narrative that one such can be found.¹

Leaving the Wady Feirân, with its groves and its brook, the Hebrews probably availed themselves of the longest, widest, and most continuous of all the mountain valleys, the Wady Es-Sheik; the great thoroughfare of

¹ *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 75.

the desert, even now. It is a more circuitous route to the Holy Mount than that of Wady Selef, but to the waggons¹ and flocks, and the bulk of the host, it would be much the more easy. The chiefs might, if they chose, climb the more direct wady, but all would meet in the Wady Er Raheh, "the enclosed plain," in front of the magnificent cliffs of the Ras Sasâfeh. "The awful and lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, would be the fittest preparation for the coming scene. The low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff exactly answer to the 'bounds' which were to keep the people off from 'touching the mount.' The plain itself is not broken, and unevenly and narrowly shut in, like almost all others in the range, but presents a long retiring sweep, against which the people could remove and stand afar off. The cliff, rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur, from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of 'the mount that might be touched,' and from which the voice of God might be heard, far and wide, over the stillness of the plain below, widened at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the contiguous valleys."² A small eminence at the entrance of the convent valley bears the name of Aaron, as the spot from which he is believed to have witnessed the festival of the golden calf. Two points in the Bible narrative are illustrated at Sasâfeh as they are nowhere else: that which describes Moses as descending the mountain without seeing the people, and the shout of the camp being heard, before the cause could be ascertained. "Any one now descending the mountain path which leads from the summit, would hear," says Captain Wilson, "the sounds borne through the silence

¹ Num. vii 3.² *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 42-44.

of the plain, but would not see the plain itself until he emerged from the lateral wady, and when he did so, he would be immediately under the precipitous cliff of Sasâfeh." There is, besides, a brook which runs down the Wady Leija, sufficiently near to justify its being described as coming "down out of the mount," in the account given of the strewing the dust of the golden calf on its waters.¹

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the law was delivered from the top of Ras Sasâfeh, to the Israelites encamped on the plain of Er Raheh, "the palm of the hand" below; unless, indeed, it be found that the height on the other side of the plain, known as Jebel Sena, but never yet ascended, should, as Dean Stanley thinks possible, prove to unite even greater claims to the honour.

But the Hebrews had rough work on their hands before they finally reached the Mountain of the Law. While still at the entrance of Feirân, the inhabitants of the oasis in its farther depths had determined to resist their advance. They belonged to the Bedouin race known as Amalek, originally from Yemen in southern Arabia,² but in the days of Moses the chief tribe of the Peninsula and of Southern Palestine.³ The place and time for an attack were well chosen; for man and beast in the Hebrew camp had suffered severely on the two days' march from Dophkah, after the cisterns or springs had been exhausted. The granite walls, heated by the terrible sun, reflected a burning glow on the host; for the hand cannot be laid on them at midday without a sense of scorching. Mutiny and tumult had again broken

¹ Exod. xxxii. 20. Deut. ix. 21.

² Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, p. 51.

³ Num. xiii. 29; xiv. 43, 45. 1 Sam. xxvii. 8.

out under the agonies of thirst, and had risen to such a height that Moses began to fear that he would presently be stoned.¹ But a miracle had supervened to supply their wants, and the rocks, smitten by the same rod as had divided the sea, had yielded water to the camp. They must still, however, have been in disorder when the hosts of Amalek, united it may be with the Egyptian garrison of Dophkah, burst on them. The inhabitants of the oasis had for centuries paid tribute to the Pharaohs, and, in return, no Egyptian soldiers were allowed to cross their boundaries without permission;² but this would readily be granted under the circumstances. Living during the colder months in the lower districts, they had ascended, as the Arabs still do, on the approach of summer, to Feirân, by much the richest of the upland valleys: the pastures being longer green at such an altitude. It was a vital necessity to drive back the Hebrews, if the priceless treasure of these scanty feeding places was to be preserved for their flocks. Then, as now, nothing was so frequent a cause of strife as the possession of such fertile spots.³ Fortunately, the smaller local tribes were friendly, the Kenites even entering into a kind of league with Moses, and the Midianites, connected with him, through his marriage with the daughter of Jethro, their sheik and emir, showing hearty kindness to the passing host.

It was a critical moment for the Hebrews. Their way to the Holy Mountain was barred by fierce swarms who knew every inch of the ground, and to whom desert warfare was a delight, and plunder of caravans a recognized source of wealth. To oppose warriors so skilful and brave, there was a vast multitude of escaped slaves,

¹ Exod. xvii. 4.

² *Uarda*, vol. xi. p. 184.

³ Burckhardt's *Syria*, p. 628.

encumbered with women, children, baggage, and herds, and provided only in a small proportion with arms. Their very numbers were, indeed, their greatest danger; but this Moses foresaw. Keeping back the great bulk of the camp, therefore, he directed that a chosen body should be gathered from the various tribes, fitted at once by their bravery, and their possession and knowledge of arms, to meet the enemy with success.¹ It is on this occasion that we meet first with the name of Joshua,² the future successor of Moses, but then a young man of the tribe of Ephraim; the son of Nun,³ of whom only the name is known. Acting as commander, the future hero, in the end, after a fiercely disputed contest, inflicted such a defeat on Amalek as rescued the Hebrews from any further annoyance while in the Peninsula. But though they reaped the fruits of the victory, they were fitly reminded, as the people of God, that pride or self-trust were out of place, since it had been gained only by the blessing of Jehovah. To enforce this magnificent lesson, Moses had taken his stand, at the opening of the battle, on the top of a spur of rock visible over the wady, and there interceded for them with uplifted hands, through the whole course of the fight. Nor had it remained unnoticed that he bore aloft the wonder-working rod of God, which had already done so much for them, nor that success wavered when his weary arms sank with

¹ The arms, recovered from the Egyptian soldiers drowned at the Red Sea, would equip a great many. The spoil in gold, etc., also, gained after the destruction of Pharaoh's host, no doubt aided the Hebrews greatly in their outlay on the Tabernacle.

² His name was at this time Hoshea = "Help"; but it was afterwards changed to Joshua = "He whose help is Jehovah"; which is used here from its being the name by which he came to be known.

³ Nun = "Fish" in Aramaic.

exertion, and was only finally secured when Aaron his brother, and Hur, the grandfather of Bezaleel,—the future constructor of the Tabernacle,—continuously held them up.

Such an attack, at such a time, sank deep into the hearts of Israel, and kindled in them their first abiding national hatred towards another race. True to the rules of Arab warfare, this first foe had “met them in the way, and had smitten the hindmost, even all that were feeble, behind the host,”¹ when every one was almost equally faint and weary. Henceforward a new battle cry, like the blazon on the Egyptian standards with which they had long been so familiar, was given by Moses to the people—Jehovah Nissi, “Jehovah is my banner,”—and Amalek was proscribed as an enemy of their God, since he had shown himself that of His people. “Because his hand is against the throne of Jehovah, therefore God has war with Amalek from generation to generation,”² said the great leader, and, by Divine direction, recorded this in “the Book,” in which, even thus early, the ways of God to the chosen race were being recorded.

A victory over so formidable a foe must have been of great importance, in kindling a spirit of manhood and nationality among the Hebrews, for Amalek was one of the greatest peoples of these remote ages. Even in Abraham’s time they are mentioned as inhabiting the regions south-west of the Dead Sea;³ and Balaam, a few years after this battle, speaks of them as “the first of the

¹ Deut. xxv. 18. See vol. i. p. 351.

² This seems the best translation of Exod. xvii. 16. See Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Exod.*, p. 512; also *Clericus*, in loc.; and Michaelis, *Bibl. Orient. Nov.*, part iii. p. 195.

³ Gen. xiv. 7.

nations"; that is, as having been a mighty race from what was then a distant antiquity.¹ Their territory extended, in fact, over the whole upper part of the Sinai Peninsula, including also the Negeb, or southern country of Palestine, and even a part of its central hills.² But well nigh a thousand years before Christ they had almost ceased to be a people,³ the sleepless hatred of Israel having nearly exterminated them. There still remain, however, on the Sinai Peninsula, some ancient dwellings which may possibly preserve a last trace of them. These are similar in form to the "bothan" or bee-hive houses in Scotland,—built of rough and massive stones, about 5 feet high and 40 or 50 feet in circumference, with no windows, and only a small door about 20 inches high. In the walls, each successive course of stones is made to project slightly inwards beyond the one below it, so as to form a dome, the top of which consists of one large slab of stone. These houses are generally found in groups, and near them are often seen the ruins of tombs—circles of massive stones—like those known in England and Scotland as Druid's circles.⁴ In the Wady Biyar, about thirty miles nearly north of Ras Sasâfeh, Professor Palmer found similar houses, which he thus describes: "They consisted of two detached houses, on separate hills, and a group of five on the side of a higher eminence. The first two had been used as Arab burial-places, but at least three out of the five remained untouched. Their dimensions averaged 7 feet high by 8 feet in diameter, but one was fully 10 feet high and 8 feet in diameter, inside. They were circular, with an oval top. . . . In the centre of each was a cist, and beside it a smaller hole, both roughly

¹ Num. xxiv. 7. See vol. i. pp. 351-2.

² Jud. xii. 15.

³ 1 Sam. xxx. 1-19.

⁴ Rev. F. W. Holland, in *The Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 543.

lined with stones, and covered with slabs of stone, over which earth had accumulated. . . . In the smaller cist the earth showed signs of having undergone the action of fire, and in one or two, small pieces of charcoal were found. The doorways, which are about 2 feet square, are admirably made, with lintel and door-posts. All the stones used in the construction are so carefully selected as almost to give the appearance of being hewn,



ANCIENT DWELLINGS IN WADY BIXAR, SINAI.
From Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, by permission.

and those in some of the doorways have certainly been worked; if not with any instrument, at least rubbed smooth with other stones. A flint arrow-head and some small shells were found in some of the houses, but to what race they belonged, I must leave to those who are better versed in the science of prehistoric man to de-

termine. The country all around is covered with them; every hill side having some remains of them on it. Close to the houses were some stone circles. There would seem to have been a large settlement, in this part, of the race by whom the houses were built.”¹

A pleasant episode in the excitement and gigantic labours which had devolved on Moses for the past three months, occurred shortly after the conflict with Amalek. He had sent back Zipporah—“the Little Bird”—his wife, with their two children, to her father Jethro, for safety, while he had gone on to Egypt; but now that he was once again near—for Jethro’s district was not far from the Sacred Mountain—he had the joy of seeing his little household brought safely back to him by his father-in-law. The very names of his two sons² would recall the time when he felt himself an alien in a strange land—“driven out” from his native Egypt—and remind him of the help God had given him in his flight from the sword of Pharaoh.³ The meeting with Jethro was thoroughly oriental. On his being announced, Moses went out to meet him, and kneeling down, touched the earth with his forehead,⁴ then kissing his father-in-law’s hand, rose and kissed him also on both cheeks⁵—each asking the other of his welfare with all the due Arab prolixity still held courteous—as they slowly made their way to the tent. Then came the narration by Moses of all that had happened since they parted—a story which decided Jethro, if ever he had wavered, to honour Jehovah as “greater than all gods;” since, “in the

¹ Palmer, *The Desert of the Tih*, p. 10.

² See p. 108.

³ Exod. xviii. 3, 4.

⁴ Meaning of the verb Shahah used here, Exod. xviii. 7. See Gesenius.

⁵ Furrer, p. 9. *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 24.

very matter in which Egypt had dealt proudly against Israel, He had been above them.”¹ Burnt-offerings and sacrifices presently followed “before God,” that is, at the spot in the camp specially set apart for public religious exercises. At the subsequent usual feast on the portion of the victims not consumed on the altar,² Aaron and the elders of Israel sat down with Jethro and Moses, and thus a solemn league of friendship was formally ratified between the tribe of Jethro and the Hebrews, which lasted through the whole future history of both peoples.

To Jethro was due a modification in the practice of Moses, in a very important point. Till now, the great leader had, alone, heard all causes brought before him from the host; giving counsel as the mouthpiece of God, deciding the various disputes, and instructing all, as the case suggested, in the statutes and laws of which God was presently to give them a fuller revelation.³ But the strength of no one man could long endure such a strain, and by Jethro’s advice a whole series of greater and lesser judges were appointed; the lowest to hear the disputes or questions of each ten persons in the camp, and the others, in rising dignity, those of each fifty, hundred, and thousand⁴—only, appeals from the last, being brought to Moses himself.

This great and salutary reform having been effected, Jethro returned to his own district.

¹ Lit. rendering of Exod. xviii. 11.

² Exod. xviii. 12.

³ Exod. xviii. 16.

⁴ The similarity of this arrangement to our system of tithings, hundreds, etc., is striking.





CHAPTER IX.

AT SINAI.

THE distance to Mount Sinai, from the point on the Gulf of Suez at which the Hebrews had crossed the Red Sea, is only about one hundred and fifty miles, including the windings of the route; but it was not till the third month after the Exodus¹ that the host at last pitched its tents under the shadow of the Mountain. They had rested at various points for refreshment or supplies; now they were to camp on the same spot for nearly eleven months, while they were being finally organized as a nation.

The great plain of Er Rahah—the “palm of the hand”—which is large enough to give ample space for the tents of a host of more than two million souls² had doubtless been selected from the first by Moses; to whom every glen and mountain of the whole region had become familiar during his long stay with Jethro. It was, indeed, the only level ground in the whole district which could accommodate the multitude as a whole.³ Nor could a fitter theatre have been chosen for the great events

¹ Exod. xix. 1.

² Sir Henry James, in *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 442.

³ See the map published by the Ordnance Survey.

which were soon to happen. The Sacred Mountain, known in its different peaks, as Sinai, "the jagged;"¹ Horeb, "the dry," or "bare;" or, simply, the Mount of God,² rose in awful grandeur before the whole camp; a stupendous height of granite rocks, torn into chasms and precipices, and shooting aloft in a wild confusion of pinnacles, worthy the names they bore. Valleys cut off its stupendous form, on all sides, from the heights round, so that it stood apart, as if separated from all else for the lofty honours now awaiting it. On the south, the heights of "Sinai" rose with overpowering majesty from the Sebajeh plain, like a huge granite monolith, 2,000 feet into the sky; the pinnacles of the central hill, rent and shattered by natural convulsions, towering still more sublimely aloft; while at the north end, or Horeb, a wall of naked rock, 1,200 to 1,500 feet high, rose in awful grandeur, directly in front of the Hebrew camp. The lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, through a framework of gigantic mountains, had been, itself, a fitting preparation for the coming scene. The plain reached without an interruption, almost to the very cliff; a low border of alluvial mounds, at its foot, unseen except at close approach, providing "bounds" to keep the people from actually coming to the mount.³

¹ Ebers explains it as "the Mount of the Desert of Sin."

² Exod. iii. 1; xvi. 1. Deut. i. 2.

³ "The plain slopes gently to the foot of the Mount, with a surface as smooth as if it had been artificially prepared. It is quite capable of having contained the entire encampment of the Israelites, for it should never be forgotten that their ordinary tentage must have occupied very little space, like that of the Arabs now. . . . I was astonished at the literal truth of the Scripture passage which speaks of the mountain that might be touched. I had often wondered what it meant, for it seemed a natural question respecting any mountain, 'Where it com-

Over the long and open sweep they could hereafter "remove and stand afar off." But from every point the wall of rock rose into the sky, in its lonely grandeur, like a huge altar, in front of the whole congregation;¹ an awful throne from which the voice of God might be heard, far and wide, over the stillness of the great plain below.

Nor were other features of supreme importance wanting. Water and pasture were essential to the existence of the host and its herds, and both were found in greater abundance in this part than in any other in the district. In the upland valleys to which the march had led them—for Er Rahah is more than 4,000 feet above the sea—springs and brooks which are never dry are unusually numerous, and must have been well known to Moses beforehand, for there would be no watercourse in all these mountains which he had not, in his long shepherd life, frequented. The heights might, moreover, be wild and bare, but the presence of water ensured many spots of pasture in the countless glens, such as Wady Sheik and Wady Sebaijeh, and Wady Feirân was close at hand with its exceptional richness.² Here, therefore, the tribes pitched their tents and awaited the further commands of Moses.

Everything around was in keeping with the purpose for which the great Leader had brought them hither. Sinai had already been, for an unknown time,³ "the

menaced.' Now, however, when I saw Mount Sinai, the literal truth of the whole description flashed upon me."—*Life of Dr. Duff*, vol i. pp. 400, 401.

¹ *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 43; and Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 189.

² As to the water and pasture of the part, see Burckhardt, *Syrien*, pp. 918, 927. Tischendorff, *Reise*, vol. i. p. 244.

³ *Exod.* iii. 1.

Mount of God;" and, indeed, as has been noticed, a sacredness still clings so ineffaceably to it in the mind of the tribes of the Peninsula, that great yearly religious feasts are held by them in its neighbourhood,¹ and pilgrimages made to it from every part of the Arab world. In such a spot every impression would act on the mind with the utmost force.

Safe in the bosom of the mountains, the Hebrews were now ready for the higher organization required to constitute them a free, independent, and self-governing nation. In this, their peculiar relation to God determined the character of the institutions needed. He had redeemed them from slavery, cared for them in the wilderness, and aided them in battle; borne Himself, indeed, to them as their divine guardian, and marked them as the special objects of His regard. Nor could they fail to be impressed with the dignity thus conferred on them; for what other people had such a Protector? Egypt, with all its glory and its host of tutelary divinities, had been utterly humbled before Him. Till now unknown among the crowd of gods acknowledged by the nations, Jehovah had shown Himself to be greater than all, and had utterly put them to shame. This Great God above all gods was the Leader and Strength of Israel.

To be thus the Chosen People involved, however, many obligations on their side. They enjoyed this amazing honour as the descendants of one who had left his native country that he might be faithful to his religion, and who had received the promises they were now to realize, as a reward for his obedience to the Divine will, and the honour he rendered it in his daily life. It was no less obligatory that they, as a nation, should, like their great forefather, "obey His voice and keep His charge, His

¹ Burckhardt's *Syrien*, p. 800.

commandments, His statutes, and His laws ;”¹ and to secure this it was necessary that these should be so plainly made known, as to furnish a permanent standard and rule of conduct for them in succeeding ages.

The unique relations in which they stood to Jehovah required, however, that the laws thus to be established should embrace not only their religious, but also their civil duties ; for Jehovah, besides being their God, was also their invisible King. They were, in fact, under a theocracy, or reign of God, who was alike their spiritual and their temporal Head. Nor was such a constitution new to them ; for in Egypt the gods had been honoured as the supreme rulers of the land, acting through the Pharaoh, one of their number ; and he and they had been honoured by a vast priesthood as its divine sovereigns. But the gods of Egypt had been mere human inventions, and their government a vain figment of superstition and craft. Jehovah, who had chosen the Hebrews in all their weakness as His “firstborn,” was the true God, and His government was no fable like that of the gods of other nations. He had delivered them from Egypt and from Amalek, from hunger and from thirst, and had guided them on their way, and now showed Himself in their midst in “the fiery, cloudy” pillar of His presence. No human king could have cared for them with a more minute and sedulous regard ; and this care was, henceforth, to be extended to all their national and private life, by the proclamation of laws which He would require them to obey for their good.

Two Divine “covenants” had already been made with man,—the first with Noah ; the second with Abraham, as the ancestor of Israel. A third was now to be established with his descendants, in fulfilment of the

¹ Gen. xxvi. 5.

promises made centuries before. The details of its institution as given in Exodus are sublime, beyond those of any other transaction in the Sacred History anterior to the story of the Incarnation. But we need not wonder at them, for if, in the case of a single soul that cries to God, He draws near to enter into spiritual relations with it; how much more might He be expected to descend, as we are told He did, on Sinai, to meet a whole people, now, alone of all the nations on the earth, looking to Him as their God, and desiring to dedicate themselves openly to His service and glory?

The cloud which had gone before the host on its march had settled over the Sacred Mountain; thus transferring thither, in the eyes of all, the visible symbol of the Divine Presence. To that mysterious centre Moses had hitherto drawn near, to receive the Divine commands; and he now ascended the mountain, which had become as it were the throne of God, to approach Him, as before, in this cloudy veil. Having done so, he received a commission such as has never, besides, been vouchsafed to man. He was to descend and tell the "house of Jacob," in God's name, that if they obeyed His voice and kept His covenant, they would be to Him a peculiar treasure above all nations,—for all the earth was His; and that as their King, He would make them a kingdom of priests to Him, and a consecrated people. Need we wonder that the heads of tribes and lesser divisions of the host, summoned by Moses to hear such a communication, answered forthwith, as if with one voice, in the name of their brethren, that they pledged themselves to do all that Jehovah had spoken.¹

The way was now opened for the formal adoption of Israel as the people of God, set apart by Him, as His

¹ Exod. xix. 7, 8.

instruments, to teach mankind religious truth, and prepare them for the final development of His kingdom upon earth, under His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Three days' preparation were commanded as for a high festival; and, in anticipation of the near approach of their Divine King, their persons and clothes, soiled and stained by travel, were to be cleansed, and all defilement avoided. The nations around made themselves ready, thus, for the approach of their monarchs, and Israel might well do equal honour to its almighty Head. Only an invited few, however, were to go up into the mountain, to His immediate presence. No others were to approach it on pain of death. It was, as it were, His secret chamber, from which, as with earthly kings, all but those summoned by Himself must keep away or perish.¹ As His abode for the time, it was holy and, as such, consecrated to Him alone as His "pavilion round about Him."

The interval must have strained the expectation of all, and filled every heart with conflicting emotions. Open to the profoundest impressions by the very awe of the preparation, they awaited the event. At last, on the morning of the third day, the peaks of the mountain were seen veiled in thick clouds, through which lightnings quivered vividly, and unintermittently, as if the vast height were aflame; terrible thunders leaped from crag to crag, and reverberated in multiplied echoes, like the sound of mighty trumpets announcing the approach of God. The phenomena of thunder-storms were in all ages associated by the Hebrews, as by other early and simple races, with the Divine presence,² and were its fitting accompaniments when Jehovah now actually drew nigh.

¹ To enter the presence of an eastern monarch, uninvited, was death. Esther iv. 11.

² Ps. xviii. 9-15; xxix. 3-9.

All nature was moved, and seemed to tremble before Him. The people had been led out by Moses to see a spectacle so august, but its terrors awed small and great; for as they gazed, the mountain appeared to smoke like a furnace, and to reel on its foundations. The scene realizes itself best from the impressions retained of it in after ages, and embodied by the inspired poets of the race:—

“The earth shook and trembled:

The foundations of the mountains moved and were troubled:

He bowed the heaven and came down,

And darkness was under His feet.

He rode upon a cherub and did fly:

Yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind.

He made darkness His secret place;

His pavilion round Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.”¹

“The earth shook; the heavens also dropped at the presence of God;

Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.”²

“His lightnings enlightened the world:

The earth saw and trembled;

The hills melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah,

At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.”³

Jehovah might Himself be invisible, but what god of Egypt could proclaim His presence with such awful sublimity? No wonder that the Hebrews shrank to the utmost limits of the plain, to get as far as they might from such overpowering terrors.

But if the sight presented were august, the words which sounded above the thunders were still more so.

¹ Ps. xviii. 7-11.

² Ps. lxxviii. 8.

³ Ps. xcvi. 4, 5.

While the people were still marshalled at the foot of the heights, Moses had ascended into the thick cloud above, and now there fell on the ear of the multitude, words, simple, indeed, and easily understood, but so full of deepest import, as to have formed, ever since, the basis of all morals and advancement.

To engage the sympathies and interest, first, of those immediately addressed, and, after them, of all ages, Jehovah condescended to reveal Himself in the relations most fitted to call forth loving obedience. To have proclaimed His power or greatness alone, or even His awful holiness, would have established no tender bonds between Him and those whom He had chosen as His people. Instead of this, He disclosed Himself as the God whose wondrous guidance they had recognized, and whose Power had been displayed on their behalf—who had led them forth from Egypt; opening a path for them through the sea, and overthrowing the mighty Pharaoh and his hosts. Thus shown to be the God of gods, He yet offered Himself as the special Guardian and Father of Israel, if its sons, on their side, maintained their fidelity to Him. He was no invention of the imagination; no mere symbol of the powers of Nature, like the idols of Egypt; but had proved Himself a strong Help to those who put their trust in Him. He was no cold abstraction, like the gods of the Nile, incapable of sympathy with man, or loving condescension, to engage the intellect and heart. He was present with them, even now; speaking to them in human language, and drawing them to Himself by every inducement of tenderness.

But though thus near and thus gracious; though thus distinctly revealing Himself as the One, Only, Living God, with all the attributes of strict Personality; He was still the Invisible, of whom no likeness must be

attempted. As a contrast to the image worship of Egypt, to which the Hebrews were accustomed, this prohibition was elaborately and separately enforced. There must be no symbol borrowed from the heavenly bodies, as in so many cases in heathenism; nor from the animal creation around, as in Egypt; nor from the fishes or sea creatures, as in Palestine and Assyria. Moreover, the awful name of Jehovah must not be given to any of the vain and shadowy idol gods;¹ for, compared with Him, all else that is worshipped as divine is an idle vanity. To keep holy the Sabbath, ceasing from all work on the seventh day, was a custom already followed from antiquity—perhaps from the days of Adam—but it was now enforced with renewed strictness, as needed to deepen religious feeling; to provide for its constant reinvigoration; and even as a merciful rest for man and beast. That honour should be paid to parents was also of great moment for all ages, but especially when, as yet, morality had no high sanctions, and barbarism largely prevailed. Not a few nations of antiquity were wont to put their aged fathers or mothers to death, or to abandon them when helpless.² Among ancient races a mother generally stood in an inferior position, and, on the death of her husband, became subject to her eldest son. But it was now commanded that the son, even if he were the head of the family, should honour his mother as he had honoured his father. Human life was little valued in antiquity, but it was now proclaimed, “Thou shalt do no murder.” Man was created in the image of God, and therefore his life

¹ This is the meaning given by Graetz to the words: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. i. p. 38.

² Darwin tells us that the Terra del Fuegians do so at this time. *Naturalist's Voyage*, p. 214.

should be sacred. The old world was poisoned to the core by prevailing unchastity, for even the gods were represented as impure. But the voice from Sinai commanded, "Thou shalt not be unchaste."¹ Property was declared sacred, and theft stamped as a crime, as was also false witness. Nor was only the outward act condemned, for even the thought of evil was denounced in the words "Thou shalt not covet."

What, in comparison with a moment like this, was the whole record of the Indian, Egyptian, or other nations, however ancient—with all their wisdom, or their gigantic creations of temples, pyramids, and colossi? The transaction on Sinai was for all time and for the life beyond. It laid the foundation of true morality and human dignity among mankind. It was the birth hour of a people differing from all yet seen. The simple, but profound truths of a spiritual God of whom no likeness was to be made—a Being who draws to Himself the oppressed and wretched;² of the veneration to be

¹ Graetz notices that the word used includes all forms of impurity.

² Widely spread tradition, says Strabo, makes the Jews descendants of the Egyptians. A certain Moses, a priest, dissatisfied with life on the Nile, withdrew from it, and, with him, many who honoured the Great God. Moses taught that the Egyptians acted foolishly in making the gods like the beasts and the ox, and condemned the Greeks also, who gave them a human form. God, he said, was no other than that One who surrounds us all, and even the land and sea—that One whom we call Heaven, and World, and Nature. But who of all endowed with reason can venture to make a likeness of such an one? Therefore all images were forbidden. They might consecrate a temple for themselves and honour the holy place—but it must have no image in it. When Moses had said this, and much more of the same tenor, he won over many thoughtful men to his views, and led them to the place where Jerusalem is now. Their

shown to parents; of chastity; of the sacredness of human life and of property; of truth between man and man; and of the necessity of a clear conscience, were first revealed at Sinai, as a legacy for all ages.

Antiquity had doubtless its glimpses of high morals, taught by illustrious minds, but they had failed to impress themselves on the masses of mankind, since they wanted the necessary sanction of Divine authority, and fell on the ear only as abstract precepts. But the Ten Commandments, proclaimed by God Himself; not only with an awful majesty, but with the attractions of Infinite love, and the terrors of unbending righteousness; stood out, for ever, as laws which henceforth demanded the reverent obedience of all.

Nor was there a less marked difference between the duties they enforced on men towards their fellows, and the practice till then prevailing on this point. There had been many laws on the subject, but they were those of the oppressor, laid on the weak as a yoke; of the strong, for his own advantage, to keep the multitude in feeble dependence. The first laws proclaiming social equality were now revealed, and sent abroad amongst men as the leaven of a higher and nobler future. The evils of caste and social proscription were thus condemned. The Israelites had come to Sinai as trembling slaves, but they returned to their tents, after hearing the words of God from its summit, a Sacred People of God, descendants for a time continued true to their pure life and fear of God. But, afterwards, a superstitious priesthood got the power over them; then tyrants; and from superstition rose the laws about food which still prevail, and also those about circumcision, and the custom of having eunuchs.”*

* “The Egyptians,” says Tacitus (*Hist.*, v. 4), “worship many animals and images made by their own hands; the Jews recognize only one God, and that with the mind alone.”

a Nation of Priests, the Peculiar Treasure of Jehovah. Henceforth, they were to be the teachers of mankind, and, as such, to bless all races.

But the great truths announced from the Mountain would have been forgotten if left without a permanent record. They were therefore engraved on two Tables of Stone, that they might be remembered for ever, and these tables were ordered to be kept in the Sacred Ark, which, when made, would be the central object in the National Sanctuary. It was necessary, moreover, that the obligations imposed by the "Ten Words," should be explained in detail, for guidance in public and personal life. Special subordinate laws were, therefore, added. That Jehovah had redeemed the whole people from Egypt was seen to imply the essential equality of all its members. There were to be no slaves amongst them. No Hebrew should either sell himself, or be sold, for life. If any one had forfeited his liberty, he was to serve only six years, and to be free on the seventh. Those who despised their parents, or committed deliberate murder, were to be put to death—even the sanctuary affording no refuge, if they fled to it. The murder of a non-Israelitish slave was to be punished, and one injured by his master, even to the extent of losing a tooth, was at once to be made free. Laws fixed the penalty for injuries to property, even when the hurt was not designed. Chastity was protected by strict enactments. The laws respecting the treatment of widows and orphans, to secure them from injustice, and to wake pity for their helplessness, were especially precise. Even foreigners who connected themselves with the tribes were to enjoy the protection of their laws; for Israel was never to forget that it had been a stranger in Egypt, and its sons must not treat others as they themselves had

been treated there. For the poor, special provision, on the most generous scale, was made; and every seventh year all the fields, vineyards, and olive trees were left wholly to them. Three yearly feasts were appointed, at which all the men should assemble at one centre, before God. Sacrifices to be offered habitually were assumed as already established, but the details of rites were left for future legislation.

A short digest of these laws, thus marked throughout by righteousness, and by a spirit of love and tenderness, was forthwith to be written down in a book, by Moses, as the Code of the new nation—the Book of the Covenant—obedience to which was the condition of God's fulfilling His promises to them. This book was apparently entrusted to the Levites—who formed the educated class of the nation.

Such inter-relations of earth and heaven bore in them, for Israel and mankind, the germs of the loftiest national and individual character. Nor is it wonderful, that, as ages passed and trouble darkened over a race thus set apart by Jehovah as His own, they should gradually have developed in its sons an assured belief that He would reveal Himself as the Messiah, to effect for them a second still greater redemption than that from Egypt. Words of such human sympathy, coming from One so infinitely exalted and so absolutely holy, opened a new religious era, of which the incarnation of the Divine Son was only the predestined culmination.

The solemn ratification of the covenant thus made was in keeping with the astonishing details of its proclamation. A mysterious presence, made known as the Angel of Jehovah, would henceforth go before the Hebrews, if they obeyed His voice, and open their way to the land which had of old been given to their fathers; but every-

thing would turn on their fidelity to this covenant with Him. If, on their part, they loyally obeyed Him as their God; He, on His, was ready formally to seal the amazing transaction. Moses, with Aaron, and his two sons—Nadab, “the generous” or “noble,” and Abihu, “He, God, is my Father”—and seventy of the elders of Israel, were summoned to the Holy Mount; all but Moses, however, being required to worship afar off. An altar, of earth or unhewn stones,¹ was built at the foot of the mountain, and beside it were set up twelve stones as memorial pillars, to witness that the covenant had been duly accepted and confirmed by each tribe.² Burnt offerings were then consumed on the altar, and thank offerings presented, the firstborn sons of chosen families serving as priests; no special priesthood having been as yet appointed.³

Then followed the formal ratification. Putting half of the blood in basins, Moses sprinkled the altar with it, and forthwith read to all the assembly, from “the Book of the Covenant,” the written words of the Ten Commandments and the laws subsequently given; the people answering, after he had done so, “All that Jehovah hath commanded we will do, and be obedient.” The other half of the blood was then sprinkled over the representa-

¹ Exod. xx. 24, 26. Altars were to be built either of earth or of unhewn stone. In antiquity the former were very common, and were known as “grassy altars,” “altars of turf;” from the sods laid on them to bind them together. If of stone, no iron was to touch the stones; they were to be left as God made them. In no case were altars to have steps to them. To prevent the legs being uncovered, the approach, if needed, was to be by a slope. A similar law, for the same reason, obtained among the Romans.

² Gen. xxviii. 18; xxxi. 45.

³ So the Targums, justly, in connection with Exod. xxii. 29, by which firstborn sons were consecrated to Jehovah.

tives of the people, as "the blood of the covenant which Jehovah had made with them;" in accordance with the custom of antiquity, which thus consecrated the offerer to his God. This sprinkling of the altar and of the people was a counterpart of the established forms by which the parties to a covenant bound themselves to its faithful performance. Such transactions were confirmed among the Arabs and other races, by the parties to it exchanging blood taken from their own persons; sometimes tasting each other's blood;¹ at others mixing it with wine and drinking it,² after dipping the points of their swords into it:³ the idea, in all cases, being, that they thus became one blood, and as such had entered into a bond of indissoluble friendship. In the Sinai covenant the same thought was embodied, but in a more befitting expression. The blood consecrated to Jehovah, poured in part on His altar, and in part sprinkled on themselves, made them one with Him: showed that He and they, henceforth, stood in the closest relations; and pledged both Him and them, by the most solemn obligation, to be faithful to a covenant thus ratified.⁴

But amidst all these amazing incidents, an event occurred which showed how the religious tone of the people had suffered, from the influences of their previous history. Long residence in a country so idolatrous as Egypt had had its inevitable result in winning them over

¹ *Herod.*, i. 74. *Tac., Ann.*, xii. 47.

² "We recited the *Fatihah* (opening chapter of the Koran), and after solemn pledges of mutual and inviolable faith, each of us opened a vein of his left arm, somewhat above the elbow, letting the blood run down and mingle in a brass cup. . . . Out of this cup we drank, each, a full draught, becoming thus, according to Bedouin usage, 'brothers' for life and death."—*Hermann Agha*. By Gifford Palgrave. P. 128.

³ *Herod.*, iv. 70.

⁴ Bähr, *Symbolik*, vol. ii. pp. 420 ff.

more or less to a sympathy with the observances seen on every hand. Not only had they been in the midst of the degrading religion of Egypt: the Asiatic tribes of the Delta, around them, had a special idolatry of their own. Some, indeed, maintain that an invincible repugnance must have been felt by the Hebrews, as Asiatics, to the Egyptian gods, and trace their heathen notions to the related Semitic peoples with whom they had been in contact. Thus, Lengerke shows how they would naturally derive them, not only from the Hyksos and other Eastern races already in Egypt, but from the position of Goshen, at the entrance to the country from the north-east, and hence open to the easy introduction of the idolatry of Western Asia. The worship of the Canaanites must, besides, have been familiar to them before their migration to the Nile, and would be kept alive in their memories by the intercourse between the two countries; while the star worship of the neighbouring Arab tribes could not be unknown, as the route to the mines in their districts was much in use. The worship of Moloch, a Babylonian god adopted in Canaan, seems, indeed, to have been practised by the Hebrews while still in Egypt. They had apparently already, while there, learned to devote their firstborn children to that hideous idol, as a burnt sacrifice.¹ Many details of the Mosaic laws, in fact, seem to allude, directly, to this god; as where Jehovah claims for Himself the firstborn. The scapegoat of the Day of Atonement² was the counterpart of offerings sent into the wilderness to Moloch. The ass was sacrificed to him, but must, in Israel, have its neck broken, if not redeemed.³ The stern prohibition of any payment for impurity being accepted by the priests for

¹ Ezek. xx. 26.

² Lev. xvi. 22.

³ Exod. xiii. 13; xxxi. 20.

the worship of Jehovah,¹ was, moreover, evidently aimed at the licentiousness of the service of Ashtoreth, the Asiatic Venus.² Jeroboam's calf-worship, as we shall see, was due to Assyrian and Phenician, not Egyptian influence, though the second commandment was directed against the multitude of idols and symbolical images in Egyptian temples, and especially against the worship of animals. In later times at least, without question, the idolatry followed by Israel was Assyrian and Babylonian: their worship of Siccuth and Chiun, mentioned by Amos,³ being that of the Assyrian gods Sakkoth and Kewan, the planet Saturn.

Ezekiel, indeed, tells us that while they were still on the Nile, God had demanded that they should not defile themselves any longer with the idols of Egypt, and had required every man to "cast away the abominations of his eyes;" the household gods to which he did reverence.⁴ But these may either have been Egyptian or Asiatic. It seems implied, however, in Leviticus, by the stern command, "to offer no more sacrifices to goats,"⁵ that, in some cases, at least, they copied the native idolatry of the Nile, if, indeed, the reference be not to the goat-like demons or satyrs supposed to haunt the desert.⁶

The incidents of the struggle with Pharaoh; of the march to Sinai; and of the giving of the law; had been designed to substitute, for such idolatry, faith in Jehovah, as the invisible but all powerful leader of Israel, and the

¹ Deut. xxiii. 18.

² Lengerke's *Kanaan*, pp. 376-8. See Mövers' *Phöniz.* vol. i. pp. 363, 371. Prof. Sayce holds that Asherah—the goddess of fertility—was quite distinct from Ashtoreth, or Astarte—the Assyrian Istar. *The Bible and the Monuments*, p. 72.

³ Amos v. 26. See vol. i. p. 59. ⁴ Ezek. xx. 7, 8; xxiii. 3, 8.

⁵ Lev. xvii. 7; xviii. 23. See p. 64.

See same word, Isa. xiii. 14, 21, 34

one only living and true God. But it was natural that among a people so accustomed to idols, and in an age when the sight of the Deity was held absolutely essential by mankind at large, there should be a craving for some visible symbol even in the worship of Jehovah. This had been already indulgently met, by the presence of the cloudy and fiery pillar before the host, and by the overpowering spectacles of the Holy Mount. It was further, presently, commanded that as an additional emblem of the presence of God amongst the people, a perpetual fire should burn in the Tabernacle which was to be constructed. But the total proscription of such images and symbols as they had seen on every hand in Egypt, was too sublime an advance in religious ideas to be accepted or understood at once. Nor must we judge such a nation too hardly, when we remember that, even at this day, Eastern Christendom has its sacred pictures, and the Western Church its images, as aids to devotion. It is difficult, even after so many ages, for civilized, as for uncivilized, races, to banish everything human and sensuous from their conception of an invisible God. The Hebrews, who till a few weeks before had worshipped Apis or Mnevis, the ox-gods of Egypt—or Moloch, the ox-god of Canaan—must have found it still harder to trust in an unseen Being, and doubtless were inclined to think Moses such an incarnate divinity as they had been accustomed to consider the kings and priests of Egypt. But since their arrival at Sinai he had not continued with them as before. After the first few days he had been summoned to the Mount, and had now remained there more than a month, till it seemed to some in the camp, in spite of the cloud of the Presence on the heights above them, as if he had forsaken them, or had perished among the lightnings and thunders.

Helpless and lost in the absence of a leader, they demanded that Aaron should make a god for them, like those they had known in Egypt, to be, in their eyes, the God who had brought them out from that land, and to go before them, instead of Moses. They had no thought, apparently, of worshipping any other being than Jehovah, but wished to do so under the form of a familiar idol;¹ and that within a few days after the command had sounded to them from the Mount, forbidding all such "similitudes."

The sacred ox—Apis—of Memphis, close to Goshen, was one of the greatest of Egyptian gods, the incarnation of Osiris, and his most cherished emblem as the patron of agriculture.² It was, indeed, worshipped under three names, at different places, as Apis, Basis, and the black calf Mnevis, whose shrine was at On, almost in the midst of the Hebrew population. But of these three, Apis was the most famous. A



BRONZE FIGURE OF APIS. — W. L. Wilson.

calf, affirmed by the priests to show the mysterious markings which proved its divine birth, was brought on a sacred ship to Memphis, with great pomp, and conducted to a splendid palace-temple, where extensive courts and shady walks were provided for his pleasure, and hosts of menials attended to wait on him. He was allowed to drink only from one special well, and his food was as carefully chosen as if he had been really

¹ Exod. xxxii. 4. Aaron says, "*This is thy god,*" etc. (lit.)

² Plut., *de Is.* 74. Warburton's *Divine Legation*, vol. iv. pp. 3, 5, 7.

divine. Oxen were sacrificed to him,¹ and he received the constant adoration of multitudes who came to worship or to consult him as an oracle. His answers, indeed, must have been distressingly uncertain, for they seem to have been determined by the readiness with which he took food from the hand of the inquirer; from the particular door by which he entered his gorgeous stable; and by other indications of a class no higher. His magnificent tomb has already been described,² but his death was an event which eclipsed the gaiety of all Egypt. Every one shaved his head, and gave way to lamentations, which continued till a new Apis was found, and then the rejoicing was as universal. As with other gods, high festivals were held yearly in his honour; his birthday, especially, being a great national holiday, celebrated with sacrifices, feasting, and religious dances, but also with foul licence and vice. Herodotus describes some of these religious saturnalia, from which the characteristics of the feast of Apis may be judged. Women played on castanets, men on flutes; the multitude singing and clapping their hands together to the music. Lascivious dances turned the precincts of the temple into a wide abomination, and wine, drunk to excess, heightened every other evil. Such festivals were indeed common. At that of Isis, men and women beat themselves after the sacrifice, like the flagellants of the middle ages, while the Carians settled on the Nile,³ cut their foreheads with knives.⁴

¹ *Herod.*, ii. 38, 41. ² Page 16. For his "marks," see p. 64.

³ Lev. xix. 28; xxi. 5. 1 Kings xviii. 26, 28. Jer. xvi. 6; xli. 5; xlvii. 5.

⁴ *Herod.*, ii. 60. Dances and music were usual at the religious festivals of the Jews. Exod. xv. 20. Jud. xxi. 2. 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. 2 Sam. vi. 6. Dancing, as a religious act dates indeed from

Of the local worship of Moloch, the ox-god of the Asiatic tribes of the Delta, we have no details, but no doubt it was similar to that of Apis or Mnevis, and the feasts in its honour would be equally licentious and revolting.

Deficient in the great qualities of a leader, which so pre-eminently marked his brother Moses, Aaron weakly listened to the clamours of the crowd, that he should provide for them an idol emblem of Jehovah. He may have withstood the demand till awed by fear of personal violence; for tradition assigns the death of Hur to his resistance to the proposal. Yet, as the results showed, only a small part of the host were actually compromised

the earliest ages, and prevails in some countries even at this day. In India, for example, dances before an idol are a feature of nearly every religious festival, and the dancing of Mahomedan dervishes is well known. Very possibly the idea is not unfounded which traces such rites to an imitation of the heavenly bodies.* Lucian unhesitatingly maintains this opinion. "Dancing," says he, "is no new custom, but dates from the beginning of all things; for the circling motions of the stars, and the movements among each other of the planets and fixed stars, and their well-ordered harmony, explain its origin." Even Milton supposes such religious dances among the angels in heaven, before creation.

"That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill;
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets, and of fixed† in all her wheels,
Resembles nearest: mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular,
Then most, when most irregular they seem;
And in their motions harmony divine,
So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear
Listens delighted."‡

* Volney's *Voyage en Syrie*, vol. ii. p. 403, note.

† Fixed = fixed stars.

‡ *Paradise Lost*, Bk. v. 618-627.

in this religious defection,¹ and the whole movement might have been crushed in the bud, by manly firmness. Instead of this, however, he invited the men, with their wives, sons and daughters, to give him their golden earrings to melt into the image they desired. It was fitting to make it of such materials, for many of these ornaments, engraved with magic characters, and consecrated to some idol, were worn as amulets.² Thin plates of gold formed from these sufficed to coat over a wooden figure, of Moloch, Apis, or possibly of the calf Mnevis; Aaron, or rather those appointed by him, engraving the necessary sacred marks on it,³ and thus preparing it for worship by the multitude.

That the golden calf was a copy of the sacred ox or calf of Egypt, has, till late years, been generally taken for granted.⁴ It is now, however, questioned, as has been noticed, whether it was not rather a reproduction of the god Moloch, worshipped by the Asiatics in the Delta. A common national origin, as well as numerous intermarriages, would make such an idol at once familiar and attractive to the Hebrews. They might be proud of their descent from Abraham, but they retained at all times a lingering attachment to the idolatry he left behind him at Harran. The teraphim in Jacob's household and camp were, indeed, only a first indication of a feeling that showed itself through all their history, to the downfall of their State. The names of the gods worshipped and the forms of idolatry might vary, but un-

¹ See the small number mentioned in Exod. xxxii. 28.

² Eichhorn's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, vol. i. p. 524. Winer, art. *Ohringe*.

³ See page 64.

⁴ See Knobel's *Exodus*. Lange. Keil and Delitzsch. Köhler. *Speaker's Bible*. Kalisch, and others.

doubtedly the bias to Babylonian and Canaanitish heathenism never died out. They were especially given to the worship of Moloch through their whole subsequent history. "There is no trace," says Bunsen, "of any Asiatic stem ever borrowing a religious solemnity from the Egyptians; for the idols of the Nile were an abomination to such races, when not an object of ridicule." He therefore thinks that the golden calf was an image, not of Apis, but of Moloch, who was worshipped under the shape of an ox, or as a human form with an ox's head.¹ He adds, that he himself met some chiefs of the Druses, in London, in 1842, who carried about with them a small gilded figure of an ox, in obedience, as they said, to an immemorial custom of their people.²

Tradition fixes the time of the Hebrew defection as in the month of Tammuz, our July,³ which would correspond with that of the annual summer feast of ancient religions, especially the Semitic; the festival changed afterwards by Moses into the Feast of Tabernacles, all that was impure and idolatrous being excluded. A considerable interval must have passed before everything was prepared, but at last, six weeks⁴ after his brother had gone up into the Mount, Aaron announced that the next day would be kept as a feast to Jehovah; the golden calf being recognized as in some way His symbol.

¹ Mövers, *Phöniz.*, vol. i. p. 372.

² Bunsen's *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. pp. 180-183. Ewald agrees with him that the calf was not an allusion to Egyptian but to Asiatic idolatry, as introduced to Egypt by the Hyksos. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 258. Lengerke thinks it was Apis. *Kanaan*, p. 381. Sayce says, without hesitation, that it was Moloch. Lengerke died in 1855.

³ Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 417.

⁴ Exod. xxiv. 18.

With the dawn of morning, matters came, finally, to a crisis. Burnt sacrifices and peace offerings having been presented to the calf, the people sat down to feast on the parts of the victims not consumed on the altars; and, this being ended, gave themselves up to the wild licence with which such occasions had been associated in Egypt. Meanwhile, no messenger had been sent to Moses to warn him of what was afoot; if indeed awe would have permitted any one to ascend the Mount. But now a Divine intimation apprised him of the danger, and he hurried down towards the camp. Presently, as he and Joshua came nearer, and the noise of the feast reached them, it was supposed by Joshua, soldier-like, to be the sound of a hostile attack, such as that made by Amalek not long before. But Moses, true to his own instincts, interpreted it rightly, as neither the shout of victory nor the wail of the defeated, but the roll of wild choruses in a religious festival.

Once amongst the people, the influence of his strong will was seen in an instant. Passing straight to the idol, he ordered it to be instantly removed, and broke up the assembly by the mere awe of his presence.

The incident had been critical, for God had threatened to consume the whole multitude for such an apostasy, and had only spared them at the earnest and touching intercession of Moses. It was imperative that the evil be rooted out, as far as possible. The calf, itself, must first be utterly degraded from all suspicion of divine power, and was therefore ground to powder, and strewn on the stream of which the people had to drink. To kill a sacred animal was a terrible sacrilege, but to be forced to drink the ashes of a desecrated idol, was a still more impressive punishment.

Yet, this was only the beginning of retribution.

Though tender and loving as a woman; willing indeed to be blotted out of the book of God,¹ if only the sin of his people might be forgiven; Moses had, on occasion, all the sterner attributes of a strong ruler of men. Authority had been overthrown in the vast host, for Aaron had let the people fall into wild lawlessness and insubordination,² which, if not at once crushed, would run riot in idolatry, and destroy the whole scheme of the Theocracy at its rise. Standing in the gate of the camp, therefore, he summoned to him such as were on the side of Jehovah, and was forthwith answered by all the men of the tribe of Levi, the smallest of the twelve tribes.³ These he instantly ordered to gird on their swords, and, passing through the host, to put down the rebellion at any cost. Ere night, terror had seized the offenders, and the camp was saved, but not before 3,000 men had fallen.

¹ Exod. xxxii. 32.

² Exod. xxxii. 25. "The people were naked,"—lit. "are not to be reined in." The rest of the verse may be read, "for Aaron had let go the reins unto them, for a whispering, or derision among their enemies," *i.e.*, the worshippers of the true God would hereafter be taunted as the worshippers of a calf.

³ Num. iii. 39; xxvi. 62. 23,000 males from a month old, upwards, would perhaps imply 50,000 persons in all, in the tribe.





CHAPTER X.

STILL AT SINAI.

IN its results, the apostasy of the golden calf affected the whole future history of Israel. It was an open and flagrant breach of the covenant so recently made with God, and for the time cancelled it. Even Moses felt this, and had shown that he did so, by throwing down and shattering the tablets inscribed with the "Ten Words" on which, primarily, all else rested—an act tantamount to throwing up his high commission as leader and prophet of the people. Since they had repudiated their relations to Jehovah, the laws which expressed those relations would only be dishonoured by being delivered to them. The narrative of Exodus discloses the gravity of the moment in language of mysterious sublimity. Moses, once more ascending Sinai, pleads with God for the pardon of Israel and of Aaron—praying that his own name may be blotted out from the book of heaven with theirs, if they be not forgiven. But all he can for a time obtain, is the promise that an angel would henceforth guide them to Canaan. Jehovah Himself was too offended to come near the camp, nor would it be well He should, lest His anger burst forth to their destruction.

That their God was no longer to dwell among them, as of old, struck the hearts of all with a profound grief,

which expressed itself in the striking form of a universal public mourning. Every ornament was laid aside, and the sombre dress of general humiliation and penitence adopted. Nor was this merely for a time. Henceforth, the hope of restored favour was connected with the retention of this visible confession of guilt till they had finally entered Canaan.¹ There were, also, other marks of the breach between God and His people. The tent of Moses, which had hitherto, apparently, been the temporary sanctuary of the camp, marked by the mysterious cloud at its entrance, was removed to a distance; as if the symbol of the Divine Presence could no longer be vouchsafed among the apostate multitude. There, aloof from the guilty host, the mysterious pledge of His not having wholly forsaken Israel still hung—but it was not, as before, in their midst. All who “sought Jehovah” had now to go outside the camp, and thither, also, Moses had to betake himself for Divine communications. The awe felt towards him had returned with greater force than ever after his reappearance, and his future relations with Jehovah intensified it still more. “When he used to go out to the Tent of Meeting,”² says the sacred narrative, “every man was wont to stand in the entrance of his tent, looking after him till he went in, and the cloudy pillar then came down and rested at the entrance of the tent, while Jehovah talked with Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And all the people, each time they saw it, fell on their faces at the entrance of their tents.”³ But, as yet, there was no priestly or Levite

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 4-6. ² The tent where Jehovah met with Moses.

³ Exod. xxxiii. 7-11. All these verses speak of events happening often. When Israel is spoken of as a stiff-necked people, it means, a people who in their haughty self-will throw back their necks, as if in defiance.

guard over the sacred dwelling, for, when Moses returned to the camp, it was left in charge of Joshua.¹

Forty days elapsed after the great catastrophe, before the prayer of Moses received a full answer, and then, at last, the life of Aaron was spared, and Jehovah once more promised, Himself, to go before Israel to Canaan.² This was equivalent to a renewal of the covenant, and a re-appointment of Moses to his great commission. He therefore, forthwith, resumed his old position. But, as at the burning bush he had craved some sign of the Divine favour, and some pledge of help, he now, with the yearning so peculiar to antiquity for a vision of the God-head, asks that his re-installation might be similarly accredited,³ and this petition also was granted. Placed in a crevice of Sinai, the majesty of Jehovah passed by, and a voice was heard proclaiming His presence and attributes. A new period in the career of the great prophet dates from this time.⁴ Two other tables, hewn from the mountain side, and inscribed afresh with the "Ten Words," marked publicly the renewal of the covenant. Once more he remained forty days in the mountain, but this time the camp stood the test of his absence, and there was no sign of defection. Descending at last with the pledge of restored favour with God, it became evident that he stood on a loftier elevation than before, above his countrymen, and was surrounded by an awful and mysterious greatness. A supernatural light, caught from near approach to the glory of Jehovah, shone from

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 11.

² The pleading of Moses with God for Israel is unspeakably touching, and so also is the language ascribed to Jehovah: "Must then *My* presence go with Thee: will nothing less suffice, that *I* may give thee rest?" Exod. xxxiii. 14. Ewald's translation.

³ Exod. xxxiii. 18.

⁴ Exod. xxxiv. 29.

his features¹ and required to be hidden by a veil till it gradually faded, and it was noticed that this splendour was renewed as often as he returned to the camp from communion with God.²

The covenant having been thus re-established, it was now possible to prepare a more formal sanctuary than the tent of Moses. It was fitting that a centre should be provided to which all might turn as to the visible abode of Jehovah, the God-King of Israel. Accustomed to see images of the gods present among other peoples, they craved some equivalent, and were graciously heard. Though symbols of Jehovah were proscribed, they would have among them the mysterious cloud which attested His presence, and could thus boast far higher honour than any other nation.³

How "the pattern" of the future Tabernacle was revealed to Moses is not told us: we only learn that he was guided in its construction by monitions from God. It may be, as Dean Perowne puts it, that "the lower analogies of the painter and the architect, seeing with their inward eye their completed work, before the work itself begins, may help us to understand how it was that

¹ The Hebrew word *karan*, to shine, is connected with *keren*, a horn, and hence, in the Vulgate, Moses is represented as having horns after his return from the Divine presence. This is the origin of the fancy which depicts him, as in the master-piece of Michael Angelo, with horns.

² Exod. xxxiv. 4-35. Deut. x. 3-5, 10. Comp. 2 Cor. iii. 7 ff.

³ In antiquity the desire for a visible presence of the deity was not only a great cause of the multiplication of idols, but showed itself in the passionate enthusiasm with which the household gods were kissed, watched and protected. For any one to lose his gods was to lose all pledge of security or welfare. It was natural, therefore, for Israel to wish earnestly that God might be present, by some symbol, amongst them.

the vision on the Mount included all details of form, measurement, materials, the order of the ritual, and the apparel of the priests.”¹ The case of David, who tells us that the smallest particulars respecting the Temple were included in the things which “the Lord made him understand in writing, by His hand upon him,” that is, by an inward illumination which seemed to exclude the slow process of deliberation and decision, furnishes a parallel to that of Moses.² But if thus mysteriously planned, its execution was left to human instruments, among whom the names of only two survive—Bezaleel, “in the shadow of God,” *i.e.*, under His protection, of the tribe of Judah; and Aholiab, “the father’s tent,” of the tribe of Dan—who had doubtless gained their artistic skill in Egypt.

The Tabernacle, as its name implies, was a movable tent-temple, suited to the requirements of an unsettled and wandering people. It was, hence, necessarily, small—its length being only about 45 feet, and its breadth 15, which was also its height.³ Its sides and western end, for it was open at the east, were formed of boards of acacia wood,⁴ the only timber in the Sinai region suitable in its size and qualities. These boards were fixed in wooden sockets covered with silver; a plating of gold over both sides, and also over a series of acacia pillars and connecting bars, by which the structure was made firm, lending further dignity to it; though the splendour

¹ Art. *Tabernacle*, *Dict. of the Bible*.

² *Ibid.*

³ The cubit is reckoned = 18 in. here and in the following pages. Conder makes it = 16 in.

⁴ Tristram’s *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 391. The tree is the *Acacia Sergal*. Its seed has a pod like that of the laburnum: its bark is used for tanning: camels browse on its terrible thorns, and it yields the gum arabic of commerce. Acacia wood was largely used for ship-building in antiquity, from its toughness and durability. Ritter’s *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. p. 335.

thus lavished was hidden beneath a succession of coverings which constituted the roof, and extended down the sides and end, nearly, if not quite to the ground.

Of these, the innermost displayed the highest art of the day in the shape of figures of the symbolic cherubim, woven in deep blue, purple, and crimson, on a white ground of the finest linen or cotton fabric. This, apparently, formed the ceiling, and hung down, as gorgeous tapestry, over the inside of the golden walls.¹ Above this, as a protection to it, was laid a second covering of camel-hair cloth, reaching down the outside almost to the earth. Next came one of rams' leather, dyed red, and, over this, the fourth, of the skin of the dugong, a kind of seal, found still on the Red Sea, and known to the Hebrews as the "tahash."² The leather made from this material is even at present used for sandals and shields in the Sinai peninsula, and was anciently in demand for the winter tents of soldiers, from being impervious to water, and as a fancied protection from lightning.³

The interior was divided into two chambers, the eastern—forming the Holy Place—30 feet long by 15 broad; the inner—or Holy of Holies, only 15 feet square. Like the corresponding space, bearing the same

¹ Jos., *Ant.*, III. vi. 11.

² The Hebrew word, Tahash, is no doubt the equivalent for the Arabic "Tuhash," which is a general name for the various species of seals, dugongs, and dolphins found in the Red Sea. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 44.

³ Palmer's *Sinai*, p. 39. Knobel's *Genesis*, p. 261. The use of the acacia wood and of tahash skin in the construction of the Tabernacle are striking "undesigned coincidences," in proof of the strict historical truth of the narrative. Both are local productions, unknown elsewhere. Eichhorn, *Einleitung*, vol. iii. p. 266. Furrer's *Geographie*, p. 11. The custom of dying rams' skins red still continues. *Irby and Mangles*, p. 258.

name, in Egyptian temples, this specially sacred spot was at the west end, and was wholly unlighted; for a double curtain of the finest workmanship, bright, like that on the inner walls, with many colours, and adorned with strange forms, like the curtains of golden tissue before the Holy of Holies of an Egyptian temple, at once divided it from the Holy Place, and veiled it in permanent darkness.

The sacred tent was enclosed in an open space 75 feet broad and 150 feet long. Of this, the eastern end, or entrance, was closed by hangings of costly workmanship, though not of the same exceptional fineness as that of the inner curtains;¹ the pillars supporting them being plated with copper, except on the cornices, which were covered with gold. The connecting bars above, however, were gilded throughout, and the hangings themselves were held up by golden hooks, though the sockets of the pillars were only of copper. That the entrance was at the east, and thus faced the west, was in keeping with the usual practice of the age in sacred structures.²

On the other three sides, a series of pillars and bars, strengthened and ornamented with silver and copper, formed a framework from which hung a line of curtains, depending from silver rods. But their height was only $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet, while the Tabernacle within was 15.

The sacred equipment of this sanctuary was inevitably, in some respects, similar to that of heathen temples, though in vivid contrast to them by the absence of any idolatrous symbols. In His wisdom, God here, as elsewhere, sanctioned the use of existing forms and ideas, as already familiar and easily understood, but separated from them all that might lead to error.

¹ Exod. xxvii. 16.

² Rosenmüller, *Bib. Alterth.* I., i. 137.

Sacred Arks had been seen in every temple in Egypt,¹ as the shrines of the idols, or of some object equally sacred and idolatrous; as in later times in the case of that of the Temple of Artemis, at Patræ, in Achaia, which contained the image of Dionysus, veiled from sight in reverent secrecy; or of that of the Temple of Hera, at Olympia, in which were kept several idols, and some sacred books, as in that of Israel.² Such an Ark was commanded by God to be prepared and placed in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle, as the symbol of His having taken possession of it as His peculiar dwelling-place. It was to be of acacia wood, the material least liable to decay, of any available. In size it was only small, for it measured no more than 3 feet 9 inches in length, and 2 feet 3 inches in width and depth. Without and within, it was overlaid with the purest gold; a moulding of the same material running along its upper edges, to receive a golden covering known as the Mercy Seat. This, also, was made of beaten gold, with two cherubim, apparently of human form, rising, one from each end, with outspread wings, and bending towards the centre; for images were not proscribed altogether by Moses, except as symbols of religious worship. Rings of pure gold in its four corners, or "feet," received staves similarly plated, and these were never to be removed, lest in taking them out the priests might touch the sacred chest itself.³ The sacredness of the Tabernacle culminated in this supreme symbol of the presence of God; for it was from between the cherubim,⁴ as the

¹ They were common also to the Assyrians, Babylonians, Etruscans, Trojans, and Greeks.

² Bähr's *Symbolik*, vol. i. p. 399.

³ Num. iv. 15.

⁴ God is often spoken of as "dwelling between the cherubim"

mystic supporters of His throne and its unsleeping guardians,¹ that He made known His will to Moses, and accepted the atonement made once a year for the sins of the people, when the high priest entered, at this long interval, to sprinkle the mercy seat with the blood of the appointed propitiation.

Inside the Ark, however, there was no idol, to be borne about on high festivals, and shown to the people, as in heathen religions; but in its stead only the two Tables of the Commandments, spoken from Sinai, and the Book of the Covenant, made by Jehovah with Israel: the fitting emblems of the true religion.²

In the Holy Place, next the Holy of Holies, stood the Table of Shewbread on the north side, the altar of incense in the middle, and the sacred seven-branched lamp on the south. Of these, the Table of Shew-



EGYPTIAN PRIESTS BEARING THE SHRINE OF
A GOD.

bread, or rather, "Bread of the Presence," was of acacia wood, 3 feet long, 18 inches broad, and 2 feet 3 inches high, plated with pure gold, and strengthened and ornamented with a framework a handbreadth deep, also

(Ps. lxxx. 1; xcix. 1). See, also, Exod. xxv. 22). Elsewhere they bear the throne of God (2 Sam. xxii. 11. Ps. xviii. 10. Ezek. ix. 3; x. 4, 18). In the last verse it is said "the glory stood over the cherubim."

¹ Bähr's *Symbolik*, vol. i. p. 377.

² The pot of manna and Aaron's rod were added afterwards.

covered with gold; on which the top rested. Two staves plated with gold, and passed through four golden rings at the corners, supplied the means of carrying it when needed. On this table the priests were to place twelve cakes, in two rows, each Sabbath, strewing incense over them,¹ as a sign that prayer and thanks were ever becoming; removing them at the close of each week, and replacing them by others; those removed becoming forthwith a priestly perquisite, to be eaten in the Holy Place. The absolute dependence of Israel, alike in its tribes and as a whole, and of man as a race, on God, for daily bread, could receive no more fitting acknowledgment; for the bread of the Presence remained before Him perpetually. Besides the table itself, however, there were different vessels connected with its object; a large golden basin in which the sacred bread was brought into the Holy Place, and for holding the fine meal of offerings; pans or dishes for incense; a large flagon for the wine of drink offerings; cups or chalices from which the wine was poured on the altar;² and small shovels on which to carry the incense, weekly, from the table to the altar of burnt offering. Such a table was regarded in antiquity, generally, as a necessary part of the furniture of a temple, as in that of Belus at Babylon, where a table with flagons, incense bowls, and other sacred vessels³ stood beside the image of the god.

The sacred lamp was placed fittingly in the south, the peculiar region of the sun. Its shape was doubtless similar to that in the later Temple, of which a likeness remains on the Arch of Titus; three branches bending upwards on each side from a massy stalk, and forming a straight line of six lampholders, increased to seven by

¹ Lev. xxiv. 7.

² Exod. xxv. 29. Lev. xxiv. 5-10.

³ *Herod.*, i. 181, 183. *Diod.*, ii. 9.

a central shaft. The whole, with the lamps themselves, and the very snuffers and snuff-dishes, were elaborately wrought of pure beaten gold. Shut in by thick curtains, the Holy Place, like the Holy of Holies, had no light, and hence, to dissipate the gloom, and also to serve as a symbol that He who guarded Israel neither slumbered nor slept, all the lamps were never extinguished at one time, but shed a perpetual light in the sacred chamber.¹

The Altar of Incense,² which was only 18 inches square and 3 feet high, was overlaid with pure gold on the top and the sides, and ornamented with a raised moulding, also of gold. Four horns, covered also with rich gold, rose at the corners, and golden rings on the sides provided for its being borne by two staves plated with gold. Incense was burned in this every morning when the lamps were trimmed, and every evening when the whole were kindled, and its horns were once a year touched with the blood of the sin offering of atonement. The fire on it, moreover, was never allowed to go out, that that on the great brazen altar might always be kindled from it, or from the perpetually burning lamp.³

The Altar of Burnt Offerings stood in the outer court. It measured $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length and breadth, and was $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, and proportionately large, with horns at the corners, like those of the altar of incense, as emblems of the supplications of the offerer, rising like flame heavenwards. As such they were sprinkled ever anew with the blood of atonement, and when grasped by trembling fugitives from vengeance were a sanctuary, inviolable

¹ Ewald thinks the central lamp-holder, as a symbol of the Sabbath, rose higher than the others. *Alterthümer*, p. 435.

² Exod. xxx. 1-6.

³ Köhler, *Lehrbuch der Bib. Geschichte*, p. 370. Ewald's *Alterthümer*, p. 437.

except in a few cases.¹ Its acacia frame was overlaid with copper, and ornamental work of the same metal rose two feet from the ground, all round, to keep the feet or clothes of the officiating priests from touching it. Copper indeed, throughout, even to the rings and plated staves, was the only metal used. The hollow interior was apparently filled with earth, smoothed on the top like a hearth. Pails for carrying away the ashes, and the residuum of the offerings; shovels for lifting them; vessels for sprinkling the blood; forks for taking up the pieces of the sacrifices, and pans for the charcoal of the fires; all of copper, constituted its furniture. Such brazen altars, with similar horns, were common in antiquity, as, for example, the great brazen altar before the temple of the Syrian goddess at Hierapolis, in Syria.²

A huge Brazen Laver, rising from a stand, the whole made from copper mirrors given for the purpose by the women,³ formed the only other object of large size in the forecourt, and provided the indispensable means for the many ceremonial washings of hands and feet required by the priests, during their ministrations.

All the materials for this national sanctuary were supplied by the free offerings of the people. Nor is it at all wonderful that, though so costly or varied, they should have been procurable even at Sinai; for there were Hebrew families of various ranks,⁴ and, as a whole, the people had brought away much from Egypt, at the Exodus. Moreover, the whole quantity of any one thing required was not great, for the plates of gold, or silver, or copper, may have been very thin, and the cotton or linen for the finer or coarser curtains, was not much to come from a whole nation. That the various artificers

¹ Exod. xxi. 8. 1 Kings i. 50; ii. 28. ² Lucian, *de Syr. dea*, 39.

³ Exod. xxxviii. 8.

⁴ 1 Chron. iv. 18. A Jew in Egypt is said to have married a daughter of Pharaoh.

required should have been found in the camp, is not at all surprising, for Egypt excelled in every art needed for the Tabernacle, and not a few Hebrews, as already said, had doubtless acquired them while there. How easily could the weaving of the curtains, for example, have been learned from a people who could manufacture the famous quilted coat of mail sent by Amasis to Rhodes, of which every thread was made up of 360 strands.¹

The "Tabernacle," thus designed, took only seven months to prepare; so zealous were the penitent multitude to atone for their sin at Horeb. At last, on the first day of the second year from the Exodus, it was formally erected in the midst of the camp, the Cloud of the Presence forthwith descending on it, as a pledge of its acceptance by Jehovah as His dwelling-place among them.

But the departure from the patriarchal constitution, hitherto prevailing, implied by the new sanctuary, necessitated still further changes. There had, till now, been no special class set apart for religious duties, though there had never been wanting those who performed all needed rites for the people. Thus, before the Law was given, we read of "the priests who came near unto the Lord,"² for the individual Hebrew family had acted from the earliest times as a unit complete in itself, each with its own priest. Firstborn sons apparently had held the office—the "young men who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Jehovah," at Sinai.³ Nor did this old custom soon die out, for we find "a young man" of "the family of Judah," acting as a Levite in Micah's household at Mount Ephraim, more than fifty years after Moses.⁴ Even centuries later, indeed, the sons of David were at least

¹ *Herod.*, iii. 47.

² *Exod.* xix. 22.

³ *Exod.* xxiv. 5.

⁴ *Jud.* xvii. 7-13; xviii. 3.

titular priests,¹ and David himself wore the specially priestly ephod when he brought the ark to Zion,² while Solomon acted and was honoured as a priest on the most solemn occasions.³

The institution of a hereditary priesthood was thus an invasion of ancient customs such as only a crisis like that of the apostasy made possible. Israel gloried in being a "nation of priests," from their peculiar privileges of approach to God. The higher spiritual gifts moreover bestowed on many members of the community—raising them to the dignity of prophets or representatives of God—made the whole race, in a sense, "holy." But a system of priestly rites and laws was now to be established which could not be entrusted to the simple arrangements of former times, and, indeed, could not be duly executed except by a body of men specially set apart and prepared. How far it had been at first designed by God to introduce the Levitical worship, with its lengthened detail of ceremony, and its varied offerings and sacrifices, cannot be known. Yet it is striking to find Jeremiah saying, in the name of God: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."⁴ The inferiority of the merely ritual and

¹ 2 Sam. viii. 18. "Chief rulers" = priests. The title may be merely one of honour; but there is no ground for thinking it excludes the priestly dignity. See also 2 Sam. xx. 26. 1 Kings iv. 5: "Chief ruler" and "principal officer" = priest.

² 2 Sam. vi. 14.

³ 1 Kings viii. 62 ff. See Ewald's *Alterthümer*.

⁴ Jer. vii. 22, 23; see also Amos v. 25.

ceremonial system to the spiritual seems, indeed, to be expressly stated by Ezekiel, and to be regarded by him as a needful condescension to the tendencies of the people. "Therefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live."¹

The fidelity of the tribe of Levi, amidst the defection of the calf-worship, seems to have determined its being chosen for the honours of the hereditary priesthood now to be introduced. Moses had indeed implied this in the words with which he launched them forth against their brethren: "Fill your hand to-day (with a gift) to Jehovah; consecrate yourselves to His service; if you have to turn against even son or brother, spare them not. Your fidelity will bring down a blessing on you. Henceforward you shall be devoted for ever to Him alone."² A beautiful legend as to the choice of Levi for the honour of the priesthood must not be overlooked. "When Jacob," say the Rabbis, "fled from his father's house to Mesopotamia, and a Divine vision had promised him a splendid future, he vowed that, if the Almighty would protect him, keep him from sinful deeds, and restore him in peace to his home, he would consecrate a tenth of all that he had to God. Returning from Syria rich in goods and herds, the pious father, true to his vow, separated the tenth of all he possessed, to a holy end. But the angel who appeared to him at Mahanaim, asked him, Thinkest thou, Jacob, that thou hast quite fulfilled thy vow? Know that the Lord claims not mere worldly gifts alone! Thou hast more than ten sons, and thou hast not yet tithed them to God. Wishest thou not to consecrate one of them to His service? And Jacob forthwith did

¹ Ezek. xx. 25.

² Exod. xxxii. 29. See *Keil and Delitsch. Knobel. Hesa, Geschichte Moses*, vol. i. p. 308.

as the angel counselled. Counting from Benjamin, Levi was the tenth, and on him fell the lot, to be holy to the Eternal, and therefore was he chosen to the priesthood."¹ But the historical grounds for the selection are a more trustworthy explanation.

As was befitting, a special dress was appointed for the priestly class thus appointed. It consisted of a pair of short white linen drawers, reaching from the loins to the middle of the thigh,² and a cassock of diamond or chess-board pattern³ of the same material, woven in one piece throughout, which came nearly to the feet, and was secured round the waist by a white linen girdle, embroidered with flowers in blue, purple, and red. These, with a round turban, like the cup of a flower, completed a costume sufficient for a hot climate. This dress, however, was only worn during the performance of duty; that of the people generally being apparently substituted at other times. No one was



EGYPTIAN PRIESTS.

¹ Beer's *Leben Moses*, p. 27.

² Jos., *Ant.*, III. vii. 1. Exod. xxviii. 40-42. Lev. viii. 13.

³ Bähr's *Symbol.*, vol. ii. c. 3, § 2. Leyrer in *Herzog*, vol. vii. p. 714.

allowed to sleep in it, and when it was soiled it was never washed, but torn up to make wicks for the sacred lamps. The sanctity of a holy place in the East, which had required Moses to take off his sandals at the burning bush, found a similar expression in the case of the priests, who were required to minister barefoot; and this they tenaciously did, though it not only drew ridicule on them from the heathen,¹ but often seriously affected their health.²

In addition to the dress of his humbler brethren, the high priest wore, over the usual cassock, an upper sleeveless robe of purple-blue, woven in one piece, elaborately fringed at the neck, and ornamented round the skirt, which almost reached the feet, with alternate golden bells, and pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson. Above this came the ephod, a shorter tunic,



¹ Juv., *Sat.*, vi. 159. *Ugolini*, vol. viii. p. 976; vol. xiii. p. 405.

² The Egyptian priests also were barefooted at their ministrations, and Mahommedans compromise matters by putting on slippers on entering their mosques. *Rosenmüller's Scholia in Vet. Test.*, vol. i. p. 412.

with slits for the arms, like the robe beneath; the back and front being connected by shoulder pieces of broad golden embroidery, in which were inserted two large onyx stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes—to mark the representative character of their wearer. Over this ephod, suspended by blue cords from golden rings, hung a breastplate of the same rich materials as the shoulder pieces, folded into a square pocket of a span



EGYPTIAN HIGH PRIEST.

in size each way. On this flashed twelve precious stones set in gold, in three rows, and engraved, like the shoulder jewels, with the names of the tribes. With this ornament was associated, in some way, the mysterious "Urim" and "Thummim," in connection with which the Divine will was made known through the high priest, in his official capacity. What the words really mean is, however, very uncertain. They have been supposed to refer to something analogous to an ornament worn by the president of the High Court of Justice in Egypt, who

was necessarily a priest—a small figure, composed of costly stones, which was called Truth—forming perhaps an image of the goddess Tme, whose name has been supposed by some identical with "Thummim,"¹ though

¹ Ebers gives the name of the goddess as Ma. She had closed eyes, and wore an ostrich feather on her head. The amulet called Ma was set with precious stones. *Eine Ägypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 219.

many Egyptian scholars reject this derivation. It would seem, however, as if the translators of the Greek Bible had been of this opinion, as "Thummim" is always rendered "Truth" by them. So, also, "Urim" is thought traceable to the Egyptian word for "revelation." Hence it has been suggested that the Urim and Thummim may have been two small images—kept in the pocket of the breastplate, or hung in front of it—representing "revelation" and "truth," which in some way gave oracular answers when consulted. That there were figures of cherubim in the Holy of Holies is thought to vindicate them from want of harmony with the Mosaic system; but, unfortunately, no details are given by which to test this explanation.¹ Josephus imagines that the precious stones on the breastplate were themselves the Urim and Thummim, and the Rabbis add, that they flashed mysterious answers when interrogated. But it seems more in keeping with Scripture to regard the names as indicating an ornament unconnected with revelations from God, except in so far as these were only given through the high priest when he was clothed in all the insignia of his office—the breastplate and its associated emblems included.²

¹ Diestel, in *Herzog*, vol. xvi. pp. 742-749. Knobel, *Exodus*, on chap. xxviii. 30. Ewald, *Alterthümer*, pp. 333-388.

² M. Lenormant has found allusions in the Assyrian tablets to a gem in a royal or priestly ring, the flashes from which were regarded as oracular. This, he fancies, may explain the nature of the Urim and Thummim. That these were in the pocket of the high priest's breastplate—not outside, proves, he thinks, conclusively that they could not, as Josephus imagines, be any of the gems in front of that ornament. That the Urim—"light"—is more frequently mentioned in Scripture than the Thummim—"truth"—seems to him to support the theory that flashes of light constituted the oracle. *La Divination*, p. 83.

Philo says that the Urim and Thummim were gems cut in the

The headdress of the high priest consisted of the common turban of the priest wound round with white linen,¹ and bearing in front, fastened by blue ribbons, a plate of pure gold, on which were the words "Holiness to Jehovah." In other respects his garments were the same as those of other priests—the diaper-patterned cassock, the linen girdle, and the linen drawers.

The dignity of the priesthood was limited to the direct descendants of Aaron, the rest of the tribe of Levi being restricted to the humbler duties connected with religious ministrations. To them was entrusted the charge of the Tabernacle and its furniture, on the march, and its erection and defence when the camp was stationary. They had, moreover, to wait on the priests, and to do the subordinate work for them, in connection with the public ministrations of the sanctuary.²

The consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood followed immediately after the erection of the Tabernacle, and occupied seven days, each marked by special ceremonies; after which, on the eighth day, they were allowed to perform their priestly offices. But the great event did not pass off without a sad calamity. Nadab and Abihu, the two elder sons of Aaron, had already been honoured by being allowed to ascend Mount Sinai with the seventy elders and their father, to worship afar off, while Moses approached the Cloud of the

form of teraphim. *Vit. Mos.*, vol. iii. p. 152. Ed. Mangey. But both this and M. Lenormant's idea seem inadmissible.

In the *Speaker's Comment.* it is suggested that the Urim and Thummim were the authorized substitute for the patriarchal teraphim, and that they were used for casting lots. To me this seems fanciful, especially as regards the substitution for the teraphim.

¹ Köhler, p. 380.

² Num. viii. 19; xvii. 2-6.

Presence. But almost immediately after being set apart to the priesthood, they committed the offence of offering "strange fire;" apparently presenting incense kindled otherwise than from the perpetual fire on the altar; and perished at the hand of God for this wilful transgression of His newly given laws. Can it be that the prohibition of the priesthood from tasting wine or strong drink before entering the Tabernacle, which immediately follows the mention of the catastrophe, is a hint as to its cause? ¹

The closing weeks of the long stay at Sinai were fitly marked by a celebration of the Passover, in commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt, a year before; an incident implying the possession of immense flocks, to supply a lamb for each household. A census was then taken of the men from twenty years of age and upwards, showing as the result, a grand total of 603,550, ² exclusive of the tribe of Levi, and thus indicating an aggregate, in the whole host, of from two to three million souls. The calculation was based on the gross amount of a head tax of half a shekel, levied, for the Tabernacle, on each man; a method which left the proportion of women and children uncertain. So cherished a precedent, however, did it become, that the attempt by the Romans to introduce a more correct enumeration under Quirinus, in the days of Herod, excited a furious insurrection. A separate census of Levi showed only 22,000 males, from a month, upwards, in this, the smallest by far of all the tribes. ³

Everything was now ready for departure from Sinai. The Hebrews had encamped on Er Rahah nearly a year

¹ Rosenmüller, *Scholia* on the verses, Lev. x. 1-3.

² Ewald recognizes this great number as correct. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 277.

³ See the figures given for the different tribes, in Num. ii.

before, a mere crowd of fugitive slaves, with only the rudiments of national organization, and the dimmest religious ideas. But the interval had effected an immense change. They had learned, with an impressiveness which they could never forget, that the gods of Egypt, and with them all other gods, were mere delusions and vanities; and that the true God of the whole earth was an Almighty, Invisible Spirit. This Supreme Being had, moreover, taught them that, though Unseen, He was near at hand, as a divine Leader and Protector. They had been filled with awe by the terrors of His descent on the Sacred Mountain,¹ but from their midst they had heard words of tenderness and sympathy, which kindled their souls, and drew them in loving homage to His feet.

Nor was this all. In recognition of the fact that no

¹ In addition to special miraculous appearances and sounds, it seems as if natural phenomena had played a great part in the occurrences of Sinai. These are spoken of in Scripture as accompanied by appalling thunder storms, with rain and lightning. Jud. v. 4. Ps. lxviii. 7, 8, 9. Josephus, also, describes them in the same way. *Ant.*, V. iii. 2. A modern traveller, narrating the incidents of a thunder storm he witnessed on the spot, says: "Every bolt as it burst, with the roar of a cannon, seemed to awaken a series of distinct echoes on every side. They swept like a whirlwind among the higher mountains, becoming faint as some mighty peak intervened, and bursting with undiminished volume through some yawning cleft, till the very ground trembled with the concussion. It seemed as if the mountains of the whole peninsula were answering one another in a chorus of the deepest bass. Ever and anon a flash of lightning dispelled the pitchy darkness, and lit up the mount as if it had been day; then, after the interval of a few seconds, came the peal of thunder, bursting like a shell, to scatter its echoes to the four quarters of the heavens, and overpowering for a moment the loud howlings of the wind." Stewart's *Tent and Khan*, pp. 139, 140. Mr. Drew witnessed a thunder storm at Serbal, and exclaimed unconsciously, "How exactly like the sound of a trumpet!"

law, even the highest, can be effective, without its free and intelligent acceptance by those who are to obey it, their assent had been required and given to a formal covenant, by which they bound themselves and their posterity to honour Jehovah as their supreme Ruler and Lord. In consideration of this, He, on His side, had graciously promised them His special favour as long as they were faithful to Him. It is hard to realize the greatness of the advance implied in such a transaction. Hitherto, idolatry had reigned in all nations, but henceforth, to the Hebrews, Jehovah was the one supreme Power in heaven and earth; filling all creation, by night and day, with His Presence, and controlling all things. Hence, even the phenomena of nature seemed to them indications of His nearness and direct agency. The thunder was His voice in the heavens; He made the grass grow on the mountains, and gave rain upon the earth. The firmament showed His handiwork. When the earth trembled and shook, it was at His approach. And in the same way all human affairs were considered as under His rule, and all endowments of men as His bounty. War and peace, plenty and famine, victory or defeat, the wisdom that guides, the skill that executes, come from Him. It was a great step when such a magnificent conception passed from the bosom of individuals to the creed of a people; a step directly leading to its diffusion, through Christianity, among all mankind.¹

The laws given were necessary to show Israel its duty, for without laws there can be no intelligent obedience. But the supreme aim had been to impress the one great lesson that Jehovah, while strict to avenge transgression, was tender in love, even when forced to punish. That He alone was the God of the whole earth was, however,

¹ Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 171.

too great a truth to be realized at once. Nor was it till many generations had passed away that the idols finally lost their hold on the minds of the people; though as early as the days of Moses, by a happy play upon the name Elohim, they were branded, in contrast, as Elilim, or "nothings."¹

The grandeur of the idea of God thus conveyed was, hereafter, to be strikingly shown by its influences on the national life and religion. To trust in horses or chariots, or in walled towns, seemed utterly unworthy of a people before whose armies the Lord of the whole earth went forth.² Nor did the thoughts go anxiously out beyond this life to the unknown future, as in other nations, for whom the world had no satisfying joy. Penetrated with a sense of the presence of Jehovah in their national and individual affairs, they contented themselves with the present; their religion, in this respect, dwelling on life, as that of Egypt, in its supreme concern for the world hereafter, was chiefly concerned with death. Future existence was not denied or contradicted, but the presence of God so filled their thoughts, that it was overshadowed, and made, as it were, subordinate. To secure His favour here involved it hereafter, and hence was their great aim. That the eternal God was their portion and reward in the present, roused in them such a victorious joy, and held out such prospects of earthly blessing, as took away the thought, at once of the terror of death, and of the rewards of a life to come. They firmly believed, indeed, in a future life: it had come down to them from Abraham as an article of their creed. But, for the time, it was hidden in the splendid vision of their adoption by Jehovah as His people,³ and only gradually shone out in

¹ Lev. xix. 4; xxvi. 1 (in the Hebrew), see p. 122.

² Ps. xlv. 9.

³ Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 192.

its due importance when that glory had faded—as the stars appear only when the world grows dark.

The constitution which brought about such a state of things was unique. “Our lawgiver,” says Josephus, “had no regard to monarchies, oligarchies, or republics, but ordained our government to be what, by a strained expression, may be called a ‘*Theocracy*.’”¹ It was not a rule of priests as opposed to kings, but a direct government by God Himself. The will of the individual and of the nation was in all things to be subordinated, in the heart and outward act, to that of their invisible King. The whole community were to live as the servants and champions of Jehovah, whose direct commands were to guide at once the public and personal affairs of the nation. They had seen how weak the greatest of human kingdoms was without the acknowledgment of God, and now expressed their sense of His greatness by recognizing Him as the One earthly as well as spiritual Authority in the State.

Such a government, however, necessitated human agency, to convey the commands of their invisible Ruler to His subjects, and this it found, in the first instance, in Moses; as the prophet, or intermediary, between it and God. He might undoubtedly have proclaimed himself king, but he had no such worldly ambition, and contented himself with the glory of transmitting to his people the will of Jehovah. Under him the Theocracy flourished, but it was not to be expected that a successor should be found to fill such a dignity. The prophets, indeed, were the heirs of his great office, but they did not come prominently forward till the rise of Samuel, and, meanwhile, the people were left well nigh to themselves. But the want of a

¹ *Contra Apion*, ii. 17. Josephus, in fact, invented the word, which expressed an idea till then unknown to the Greek language

leader, though bitterly felt after the death of Moses, excited no disloyalty to the singular form of government he had established; and it was not till the end of the times of the Judges, when the first theocratic enthusiasm of the people had faded, that they sought to imitate other nations, by having a human king.

The institution of the hereditary Levitical priesthood, displacing that of the heads of families, was, as we have seen, the direct result of the catastrophe of the golden calf. It was precluded, however, from assuming such power in Israel as in other communities, by the rise of a succession of prophets, the direct representatives of God, whom even the priests must obey. They could not, therefore, form a Brahminical caste, but always held a modest and limited power in the nation. Nothing, indeed, could well be simpler than the organization of the tribes as they broke up from Sinai. The assembly of the whole male population was the ultimate authority, under God; chieftains or elders exercising a patriarchal headship over each tribe and its larger or smaller sections, and acting as their leaders; as they had done from the days of the patriarchs. The priesthood had no separate authority, for Levi was not the ruling tribe, nor was Aaron, its head, the leader; but Moses—the statesman and prophet, not the priest.¹

¹ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 157.





CHAPTER XI.

THE WILDERNESS.

IT was not till the second month of the second year that things were finally ready for a fresh advance. Then, at last, it seemed as if the great enterprise of the conquest of Canaan might be undertaken. The arrangements of the vast camp for the march were simple. Shortly after leaving Sinai¹ a council of seventy, of which Hur seems to have been the head,² was chosen by the people, from the elders or chiefs of all the tribes except Levi, and solemnly set apart to their dignity by Moses, as a kind of Senate, to aid him by their counsel, and give him the support of leading families among the various tribes; for among a people so hard to govern he often needed this added help.³ The democracy was thus administered by the chiefs of tribes and their divisions, while over all was Moses, assisted by his court of elders. Great popular assemblies decided questions of national moment submitted to them, but the Supreme authority in all things was that of God, expressed through Moses, as His Prophet.

In the open wilderness the camp was pitched in the form of a long square, guarding the Tabernacle in the

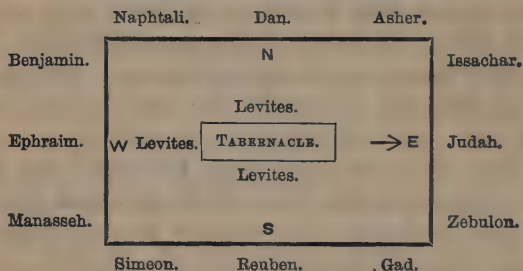
¹ Num. xi. 16.

² Num. x. 1. Exod. xxiv. 9, 14

³ Michaelis, *Mos. Recht.*, vol. i. p. 279.

centre. When the signal was given to advance, the Levites struck the Sacred Tent, and when the order came to halt they raised it again; no member of another tribe daring even to come near, on pain of death. Alike on the march and when stationary, as already noticed, they alone formed the Tabernacle guard, and took charge of all connected with the sacred furniture and vessels.¹

To the east of the Sacred Tent, and thus in the place of honour, were the tents of Moses, Aaron and the priests: on each side, and behind it, were the three great divisions of the Levites, who numbered, in all,



only between eight and nine thousand men.² The van was held by Judah, supported by Issachar and Zebulon: the left side—that is, the north, was covered by Dan, supported by Asher and Naphtali: the right, or south, by Reuben, supported by Simeon and Gad; and the west, or rear, was left to the protection of Ephraim, with whom were associated Benjamin and Manasseh.³

¹ Num. ii. 51; iii. 6 ff.

² Num. iv. 48.

³ Each army of three tribes had a "standard," and each sub-tribe or clan, an "ensign" (Num. ii. 2). The word for standard is derived from a root, meaning "to shine," "to glitter," and perhaps refers to standards similar to those used in the Egyptian armies, which were blazoned with a king's name, or

The space occupied by the camp was perhaps not so large as one might have supposed, for in one case at least, in which the precise spot is thought to be still known—the encampment at Abel Shittim¹—the open ground available for it on the east of the Jordan is not more than five miles square; though the host may have been divided, only part occupying this spot. About one-sixth of a square mile sufficed in a Roman camp for 20,000 men, with ample space for streets, officers' quarters, accommodation for horses and baggage; a vacant interval of two hundred feet being, moreover, being left inside the rampart, all round.² This is equivalent to room for 120,000 men in a square mile, or about sixteen square miles for the 2,000,000 of the Hebrews; but the "Speaker's Commentary" suggests that as they lived together in families their tents would not cover so much ground. It seems difficult, however, to imagine an encampment of two millions of people, with their cattle, and the wide open space required for the Tabernacle, except as covering a great extent of country with its one-storeyed dwellings.³

As to the formation of the columns on the march we know nothing, but some curious remarks of Kitto deserve notice. Referring to the marginal reading⁴ in

sacred boat; an animal or some emblematic device. *Wilkinson*, vol. i. p. 342.

¹ Num. xxii. 1. Note in *Speaker's Bible*.

² *Polybius*, vii. 27.

³ Paris, with its 2,000,000 inhabitants, contains, *inside the fortifications*, 7,800 square hectares = $30\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. The ring of fortifications, closely hemming in the houses, which, indeed, extend in many parts far beyond them, is 36 kilom. long: = over 22 miles. But Paris is built in houses many storeys high. *Brockhaus, Conv. Lex., art. Paris.*

⁴ Exod. xiii. 18

connection with the Exodus, that the Hebrews marched "by five in a rank," he adds: "It is possible that they may have marched in five large divisions, but that it means 'five in a rank' could only be fancied by those who had no real conception of the numbers of the people. At this rate, if we allow the ranks of only the 600,000 men fit to bear arms to have been three feet asunder, they would have formed a procession sixty miles in length, and the van would have reached the Red Sea (in a straight line), before the rear had left Goshen. And if we add to these the remainder of the host, the line would have extended, by the direct route from Egypt, quite into the limits of the land of Canaan."¹ In the wilderness, however, the four great divisions enclosing the Tabernacle, each tribe under its own standard, would, by their broad front, shorten the length of the aggregate columns, though even then, it must have been like the migration of half the people of the Metropolitan District of London.

The movement of the mysterious cloud which rested on the Tabernacle was the signal for striking or pitching the camp.² When it was "taken up" from off it, the advance was sounded³ on silver trumpets, by the Levites; Moses repeating the words, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered: and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee:"⁴ the whole host re-echoing them, far and near, in a mighty shout, as the Ark moved off before them "to search out their next resting place." In the same way, the descent of the cloud to its accustomed place was the intimation to halt, and, then, as the Ark was once more solemnly laid down from the shoulders

¹ Kitto's *Daily Bible Illust.*, vol. i. p. 92.

² Num. ix. 17.

³ Num. xi. 33.

⁴ See an allusion to this in Ps. lxxviii. 1.

of the Levites, the prayer, caught up from the lips of Moses, and entoned by the whole camp rose with overpowering sublimity: "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."¹

The distance of Sinai, in a straight line, from the south of Palestine is less than two hundred miles, but the configuration of the country made a direct advance to it impracticable. The site of the camp on the plain, beneath the Sacred Mount, had been nearly 5,000 feet above the level of the sea.² To ascend from Suez to this table-land had been tedious and often distressing; but after the rest and comparative comfort of the upland valleys, with their pastures and flowing water, the descent from the successive plateaus, through rugged gorges, without a trace of road,³ must have been equally hard for so great a multitude—a nation on the march—not yet accustomed to the difficulties of the way. The vast crowds of human beings of all ages, and of both sexes; the trains of beasts and waggons, with the tents and baggage; the herds and flocks, in long drawn succession—would fill all the ravines, far and near, which pointed at all in the same direction, and the progress made must have been equally slow and painful. Advance to the north was almost impossible, from the trend of the hills across the Peninsula, so that it only remained to skirt their base, and take the north-eastern direction

¹ Num. x. 33–36.

² Wady Feirân is about 4,800 feet above the sea level. Map in *Sinai and Palestine*.

³ Even in Palestine, at this time, the only tracks,—except the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, which resembles a cart road over a ploughed field, are like the dry bed of the most rocky river, where, amid blocks of stone, each makes his way at a foot pace as best he can. *Pal. Fund Rept.*, Oct. 1880, p. 241.

towards the shore of the gulf of Akaba—the branch of the Red Sea on the east of the triangle of Sinai.¹

Fortunately, they had with them, at the outset, the local knowledge of Jethro and the Kenites, of whom he was sheik, which must have been of the greatest value.² Three days brought them to “the wilderness of Paran,”³ which seems to have included a wide stretch of the hilly limestone region elsewhere known as El Tih, “the desert.” Here they made their first encampment, but with a spirit very far from the enthusiasm they formerly felt when expecting to enter Canaan. Far from Sinai; with only hard flinty chalk underfoot, and wide monotonous rounded hills on every side; the remembrance of the brooks and herbage they had left filled them with discontent and murmuring at their present position, though the cloudy pillar in their midst showed the presence of their Almighty Protector. Such commotions had marked their march from Suez to Sinai, but they had been tenderly dealt with. Since then, however, the relations of God with them had been changed. He was their accepted King and Head, whom they had bound themselves to obey, and murmuring was now to be visited with severe displeasure, as disloyalty and rebellion. In this case, “the fire of Jehovah burnt among them;” perhaps, terrible lightning,⁴ setting on fire the tents on the outskirts of the camp,⁵ though it is not said that any lives were lost. But a worse calamity soon overtook them. Possibly the sight of the sea, towards which they

¹ So *Bunsen*, *Major Palmer*, *Professor Palmer*, *Lieut. Conder*, and others.

² Jethro's farewell salutation “go in peace” (Exod. iv. 18), is still used all over the world by the Jews. *Mill's Samaritans*, p. 139.

³ See vol. i. p. 376. ⁴ *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. pt. 2, p. 688.

⁵ Hence the name Taberah = burning.

were approaching, or the miseries of their journey, had awakened thoughts of the past; but, however roused, the crowds of foreign nationalities who had come up with them from Egypt, broke out into loud complaints at the want of the comforts they had enjoyed on the Nile. The manna, which had been so grateful to them at first, had palled on their tastes, and they longed for flesh, or for the fish which was so abundant in Egypt,¹ and "the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic."² Great flights of birds are common in the district,³ and, it may be, added to their discontent, which they expressed with true Oriental demonstrativeness, "every man weeping at the entrance of his tent." A second supply of quails, which gave them flesh for a month,⁴ soon, however, turned their sorrow into rejoicing; for the gift proved a calamity in disguise; the people apparently eating so intemperately, after their long abstinence from flesh, as to bring on a violent outbreak of the plague, of which many died.⁵ Strange to say, Professor Palmer found on the way to Akaba the remains of an ancient camp, surrounded by an immense number of graves, which he thinks identifies the spot with the scene of this dreadful pestilence. If he be right, we have still, in these relics, the traces of the Israelitish abode at Kibroth-hattaavah—"the graves of gluttony"—especially as they occur at the distance of three days' journey from Sinai⁶—the position of the Israelites when the plague broke out. He discovered, moreover, a day's journey north of this,

¹ Page 4.² Num. ii. 5.³ *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 82. *Ritter*, vol. xiv. p. 261. See p. 213.⁴ It is common, after taking out the entrails, etc., to thrust such birds into the hot sand and dry them, so that they will keep a long time.⁵ Num. xi.⁶ Num. x. 33; xi. 4-34.

the remains of another great camp. Stone heaps and circles cover the hill sides and elevated positions in every direction, and the larger inclosures, occupied by the more important personages, with the hearths or fire-places, are still distinctly traceable.¹ That this is no other than the Israelitish station of Hazeroth—or “the circles”—hardly admits of doubt, if only from the fact that the name “Look-outs of Hazeroth”² is still given to the spot by the Arabs.³ They have a tradition, moreover, that a great Hajj caravan lost its way here and wandered off into the desert of the Tih;⁴ a fact strikingly significant, since Hajj means a great religious pilgrimage—especially that made each year to Mecca, from all parts of the Mahommedan world. But no such Mahommedan caravan could ever have passed this way. Still more, the word Hajj, which is borrowed from the Hebrew,⁵ is the very expression used by Moses when he asked leave from Pharaoh to go with the Israelites, to sacrifice to Jehovah in the wilderness;⁶ while that used by the Arabs, in the legend of the pilgrims losing their way, is the stem from which the desert of the Tih, or “wilderness of the wanderings,” derives its name. The name Hazeroth was doubtless applied to their encampment here, from their having raised these wide rings of stones to enclose their flocks and herds; branches of acacia and other thorny trees or shrubs being thrust into the top, all round, as is still done on Mount Hermon,⁷ for defence against wild beasts.

¹ *The Desert of the Tih*, p. 7, 8.

² Matali Hudherah = Hazeroth. Major Palmer's *Sinai*, p. 79.

³ Palmer's *History of the Jewish Nation*, pp. 32, 33.

⁴ *Desert of the Exodus*, 1871, pp. 357 ff.

⁵ Heb. *hag*. ⁶ Exod. x. 9; xii. 14.

⁷ Palmer's *El Tih*, p. 11.

At this place they remained at least seven days, in part through a circumstance that must have greatly affected the already troubled spirit of Moses. Miriam, his sister, to whom, under God, he had owed his preservation in infancy, apparently bore a grudge at Zipporah, his wife, as "a Cushite," and therefore of impure blood.¹ Persuading herself at last that such a union disqualified Moses for his great position as Leader, and jealous of his being the exclusive mouthpiece of God to the host, when she herself was a "prophetess," she induced Aaron to join her in claiming that they, also, should be honoured by sharing Divine revelations. But a leprosy, divinely inflicted, instantly checked her ambition, though it could not remove the bitter pains such disloyalty, in his own circle, must have given her great brother.

In this neighbourhood one of the most marked characteristics of the Hebrews as distinguished from all communities, before or since, showed itself prominently for the first time, in connection with the selection by Moses of the 70 elders as his special council, already noticed²—the original, in the belief of the Rabbis, and even of some Christian theologians, of the Great Synagogue, to which Judaism owed so much after the return from exile at Babylon.³ After having been confirmed in their dignity by the people,⁴ they assembled round the Sacred Tent,

¹ Some fancy that Zipporah had previously died, and that Moses had taken another wife from the mixed multitude that had come with the Hebrews from Egypt. Scheukel is of the opinion expressed in the text. *Bib. Lex.*, vol. iv. p. 222. Ewald, of the other. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 251.

² See p. 313.

³ See an art. by Heidenheim, in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1853, pp. 93 ff. Reland's *Antiq.*, II. iii. 7 ff.

⁴ Num. ii. 24, 26.

and the strange spectacle was seen, so peculiar to Israel, of the whole number breaking out into prophetic enthusiasm, under the influence of the Spirit of God. The Lord, says the inspired narrative, came down in the cloud, and having spoken with Moses, took of the Spirit that was on him and gave it to them. While filled with this afflatus they enjoyed prophetic exaltation, but when it passed off they sank into their ordinary state. But the occasion gave an opportunity for noting the lofty spirit of Moses. Two of their number—Eldad, “him whom God loves;” and Medad, “love”—having received the Divine impulse, though they had not joined the rest at the Tabernacle, prophesied where they were, in the camp. To the soldierly instincts of Joshua, however, “the minister of Moses, from his youth up,” this seemed an irregularity to be checked by his master. “My lord Moses,” said he, “forbid them.” But he only received the noble answer, “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them :”¹ a memorable rebuke, for all ages, to a narrow or jealous spirit, whether in the Church or in common life.

Thus, in its very beginnings, the history of Israel is not that of an inspired book, or of an inspired order, but of an inspired people. The Spirit of God rests on them in a degree, and in a manner, which we meet with in no other race. The seventy, chosen from all the tribes, anticipated, in their prophetic gifts, a characteristic of future generations. Miriam in the camp found a successor in Deborah on Mount Ephraim, nor was there a district in Palestine which did not, apparently, see a prophet or prophetess raised up in it by God, before the gift was

¹ Num. xi. 26-30.

finally withdrawn.¹ How great the fervour of religious life in a community, where a succession of individuals could be found, in whom it rose to so transcendent an elevation as is implied in the very name of prophet !

The region through which the Israelites had hitherto marched was a wide tangle of mountains, with occasional broad plains, and numerous narrow wadys, twisting hither and thither. The granite and porphyry of Sinai had begun to give way to sandstone, which now formed the upper part of the rocks ; some limestone hills to the north indicating, here and there, the proximity of the chalk ranges of the Wilderness of the Wanderings. Except in the valleys, if the region was then the same as it is now, they had been refreshed by no sight of vegetation ; for the mountains rose bare around them, save where a cleft gave footing for some trace of green. Dom and date palms, patches of broom, isolated clumps of thorny acacias and stretches of wild vines, cheered the hollows, where the sandy soil enjoyed some moisture ; while rank herbage marked the edge of the few springs on the route. The colours of the rocks, indeed, alone relieved it to any extent from its savage wildness, but these, seen through the clear air of evening, lent the silent landscape a peculiar beauty. Antelopes still wander over this district, and vultures circle in the upper air, while huge flocks of birds rest in it at times after their long flight from Africa, and wild ducks float on the ponds of Ain el Hudherah or Ain el Alya. The horned viper hides in numbers in the sand, and other kinds of snakes are met with from time to time.¹ But the wadys and plains in the line of march of the Israelites offered for the most part a footing of

¹ Knobel, *Der Prophetismus der Hebräer*, vol. i. pp. 39 ff. Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 158.

² Furrer, *Bib. Lex.*, vol. v. p. 681.

hard limestone marl; the loose sand occurring chiefly to the north-west of what must have been their route. The approach to Hazeroth, however, had been over sandy plains broken by outstanding sandstone cliffs, but the camp itself had been pitched on the sides and in the basin of a hollow, surrounded by weird and fantastic sandstone walls, displaying on their weathered surface the most varied colours—deep red and violet, and rich gold and scarlet, mingled with deep purple; masses of greenstone, and rose-tinted granite showing here and there. In the middle of the valley, under a high cliff, there is now a dark green palm-grove, while a spring bursts from a rock behind; a channel hewn in the granite guiding the waters to a tank, from which it is led by rude sluices into the gardens of the Arabs who still cling to the spot.¹

But though rest at isolated and widely separated spots may have been found here and there, the journey in the main, now, and for many a day, must have been often trying. Burton thus describes travelling in the desert: "Above, through a sky terrible in its stainless beauty, and the splendours of a pitiless blinding glare, the simoom caresses you like a lion with flaming breath. Around, lie drifted sand-heaps, upon which each puff of wind leaves its trace in solid waves; flayed rocks, the very skeletons of mountains; and hard unbroken plains, over which he who rides is spurred by the idea that the bursting of a waterskin, or the pricking of a camel's hoof, would be a certain death of torture; a haggard land, infested with wild beasts and wilder men; a region whose very fountains murmur the warning words, 'Drink and away.'²

. . . We travelled five hours through a country fan-

¹ Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, 1871, pp. 261 ff.

² *Meccah and Medinah*, p. 103.

tastic in its desolation—a mass of huge hills, barren plains, and desert vales. Even the sturdy acacias here failed, and in some places the camel-grass could not find earth enough for its root. The road wound among mountains, rocks and hills of granite, and over broken ground, flanked by huge rocks and boulders, piled up as if man's art had aided nature to disfigure herself. Vast clefts, seamed, like scars, the hideous face of the earth; here they widened into dark caves; there they were choked with glistening drift sand.”¹ The Israelites were passing through such a “desert land” and “waste howling wilderness.”²

From Ain Hudherah or Hazeroth to the north end of the gulf of Akaba is about thirty hours, or nearly ninety miles, but it is hard, if not impossible, to determine whether the host moved on to it now, or touched it first at a later period.³ It is generally thought, however, that they must have advanced north-east, through a wild confusion of narrow valleys and hills—some of great height, others cleft into awful gorges⁴—till they descended to the seashore, where a varying but well-nigh uninterrupted breadth of strand, under the cliffs, enabled them to reach the head of the gulf. There, it would seem as if we had a trace of the seventh station from Sinai—Hadarah, in the easy but little known pass near Jebel Aradah, which would lead them again, painfully, to the higher level of the Desert of the Wanderings, then known as

¹ *Meccah and Medinah*, p. 175.

² Deut. xxxii. 10.

³ *Graetz*, vol. i. p. 395.

⁴ Dean Stanley speaks of Akaba as a “tremendous pass.” *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 10. The Sinai mountains are, indeed, a lofty triangle, reached on all sides only by a long and difficult ascent.

the wilderness of Paran or Zin, and now as that of the Tih.

This region, in which they were destined to spend so many years, is a series of limestone plateaus, ascending in successive giant steps, from the Peninsula of Sinai to the hill country of Southern Palestine.¹ The southern most of these plateaus extends about eighty miles north from the point, where the cliffs of its lower edge pierce the Sinai Peninsula like a broad blunt wedge. Only a few isolated hills vary the surface, which is generally flat, and there are no signs of ancient dwellings, nor any ruins.

The district north of this has, however, an entirely different character; rising in huge steps of about eighty miles from north to south, and gradually passing, in successive terraces, into the hill country of Beersheba. The most southerly of these, known as the Jebel Magrah, is a great plain of fifty or sixty miles from east to west.² Over all this region there still are found fertile spots, with grass and water;³ and signs of ancient populousness

¹ The ascent from the beginning of El Tih to Hebron is 1,300 feet. Map before *Sinai and Palestine*.

² Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, *passim*.

³ "Nothing can be more incorrect than the vulgar idea of an Arabian oasis, except it be the popular conception of an Arabian desert. One reads of 'isles of the sandy sea,' but one never sees them. The real wady is, generally speaking, a rocky valley bisected by the bed of a mountain torrent, dry during the hot season. . . . Let the traveller who suspects exaggeration leave the Suez road for an hour or two, and gallop northwards over the sands. And then the 'oases' and little lines of fertility,—how soft and how beautiful!—even though the Wady el Ward—the Vale of Flowers—be the name of some stern flat upon which a handful of wild shrubs blossom while struggling through a cold season's ephemeral existence." *

* Burton's *Meccah and Medinah*, p. 104.

and prosperity appear in every direction. It is the district specially known in the Bible as the Negeb¹ or "South Country."

Here Moses chose his headquarters, in anticipation of presently passing on to Canaan. On the eastern slopes of the hills which form the watershed, lay a wady noted for its pastures and its abundant spring, famous since the days of Abraham, and to this the Hebrews were led. It was Kadesh, or Kadesh Barnea, their rallying point and centre during their whole sojourn in the Negeb. It lies about sixty miles south of Hebron, almost midway between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean coast,² and was in every way suited to the design of a sudden invasion of Palestine. But the great heart of Moses was doomed to a fresh disappointment. He had hoped at first to have broken through into Canaan immediately after leaving Egypt, but when the faintheartedness of the people made this impossible, he had trusted that the year's stay at Sinai, and the more thorough organization it secured, would have quickened the general self-reliance sufficiently to warrant an invasion from Kadesh. The evidences of God's presence with them, which they had seen in the Peninsula, and the promises of assistance He had given them, must doubtless have kindled the enthusiasm of many, and it seemed as if the sudden rush of a whole people, in the glow of such a mood, could not fail to carry all resistance before it.

To rouse them still more, he determined to send from Kadesh a number of spies, chosen from among the chiefs

¹ Gen. xx. 1. Negeb = the dry, the parched.

² *Wilson and Lange's Maps*. Furrer thinks the name Kadesh, "the holy," is a reminiscence of Moses as a "Saint," or that it was given by the Hebrews to the spot as the site of their local sanctuary while in the wilderness. *Bib. Lex.*, vol. iii. p. 461.

of divisions of the twelve tribes. Of these, it is significant, as showing the religious excitement of the time, half bore such names as Igal, "God saves him": Hoshea, "deliverance": Palti, "Jehovah saves": Gad-diel, "prosperity is from God": Ammiel, "the servant of God"; and Geuel, "the majesty of God." But, in spite of such names, they sadly failed in the higher qualities which the honour conferred on them demanded. Meanwhile their instructions were wise and comprehensive. They were to find out all they could as to the water supply, the climate, and the fertility of the land; the number and character of its inhabitants, and the strength of their towns and fortresses.

Starting from Kadesh they went northwards, as ordered,¹ through the Negeb, or "South," to the hill-country of Judea, and made their way as far, apparently, as the district round Merom, in the north,² and to "Rehob," which seems to have stood on the watershed between Merom and the river Litany, on the road to Hamath on the Orontes, and to be identified with the present Hunin, where there are the ruins of a strong fortress, commanding the plains to the east.³

It was the season of the first ripe grapes—which, at Hebron, is July or August⁴—and their success in the enterprise was complete; the twelve returning safely to Kadesh, after an absence of about six weeks. But their report was far from encouraging; for, though they could not dispute the fertility of the land, which was proved by samples of pomegranates and figs brought back by them,

¹ Num. xiii. 17,

² Num. xiii. 21; see 2 Sam. x. 6, 8.

³ *Kiepert's Map*. Kneucker in *Bib. Lex.*, vol. i. p. 429. Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. xv. p. 242.

⁴ *Seetzen*, vol. ii. p. 92.

and by a cluster⁴ of grapes so huge, as to require two men to carry it on a pole between them, they gave such an account of the size and fierceness of the inhabitants, and of the strength of their fortresses, as threw the whole camp into despair. It was a decisive moment in their history, and they were not equal to it. Instead of being ready to advance, they were paralyzed with fear. Even the men wept aloud, and in their panic proposed that they should elect a leader and march back to Egypt, rather than face such terrible enemies. In vain did Joshua and Caleb, the only two of the twelve spies who showed a manly spirit, seek to reanimate their courage, and promise them a certain victory, if they were faithful to Jehovah. The Divine protection, they maintained, had been withdrawn from their foes, their sins being full; and they would be given over by Him into their hands. But the excitement and demoralization were too great to listen to reason, and the only return for such brave counsels was a cry from the vast assembly, to stone the speakers. The Canaanites were trained warriors: they themselves had recently been timid slaves, driven by the lash or the stick. The fight with Amalek at Rephidim had stirred up that people and the other nations of Palestine to a fierce resistance, and the camp of Israel was full of women and children. Such terror

⁴ The grapes of Hebron are the finest in Palestine. Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. i. p. 354. Rosenmüller, *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. ii. pp. 251-3, quotes numerous authorities as to the weight of occasional single clusters of Palestine grapes. It is as high in some cases as 10 and 12 lbs.: The grapes are sometimes like plums, and a single cluster can be carried only by two men, to prevent its being crushed. Kitto mentions a bunch grown in 1819, on a Syrian vine, at Welbeck, which weighed 19 lbs., and was carried by four labourers, on a staff, two bearing it in rotation. *Palestine*, vol. ii. p. 330.

was unworthy a people led by God Himself, but it was natural. The prize now within reach was thus snatched from their leader and themselves, for the issue of such cowardice could not be doubtful. It was clear that a multitude so craven and fickle could not be launched against warlike tribes, and hence nothing remained but to continue in the wilderness. Born in slavery, with none of the manhood of freemen, they were evidently unfit for so great a task, nor was it less a necessity than a terrible punishment when their Leader announced, that they must wander outside the Land of Promise, till a new and more valiant race had risen in their place. The spies had been forty days in their journey, and for each day the host should pass a year in the wilderness.¹ Only Joshua and Caleb, the two who had shown themselves stout-hearted and faithful, were to enter Canaan.

So stern an announcement at once recalled the host to a sense of their guilt and unmanliness, and made them for the moment as braggart as they had hitherto been pusillanimous. Murmuring as if God had betrayed them, they determined, rather than turn back to the desert, to go up to the attack at once, though the Ark of God, the pledge of His presence, remained in the camp with Moses. But the attempt only led to ignominious failure. The inhabitants of the region between Israel and Palestine were "Amalekites and Canaanites,"² who had occupied a comparatively fertile expanse of country, partly arable, partly pastoral,³ between Kadesh and

¹ Num. xiv. 45. Ewald points out that forty years was reckoned a generation by the Hebrews. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 480. Bertheau, *Richter*, pp. xviii. ff.

² Num. xiv. 45.

³ This appears from the two words in used in Gen. xiv. 7, and Num. xiv. 25, respectively. The former—*Sadeh*, means land

Engedi. They allowed the invaders to penetrate far towards Palestine, and then turning upon them, pursued them as far as Hormah;¹ a city which has been identified as situated on the southern verge of the table-land, about twenty-four miles north of Kadesh. Its name at the time of the attack was not Hormah, however, but Zephath,² "the watch-tower:" "Hormah," "a desolated place," being the name given it after its utter destruction by the Israelites, in the times succeeding Joshua. It was the great point from which the roads across the desert, after having been all united, again diverge towards Gaza and Hebron, and its site is still marked by the ruins of a square tower of hewn stones, with a large heap of stones adjoining, on the top of a hill, which rises a thousand feet above the wady on the edge of which it stands.³ Smitten and thoroughly demoralized, nothing remained but to draw off the camp to the secure interior of the Negeb or "South," round Kadesh.

The region thus especially destined to be the home of Israel for a generation, is, as has been said, the second great plateau in the ascent from the Sinai Peninsula, stretching east and west from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, and the broad sunken valley of the Arabah,⁴ or "waste," south of it; and from the mountains of

capable of cultivation: *emek*, a pastoral plain or upland, not a "valley," as in our version. In Num. xiv. 45, the region is called a "mountain" in reference to the succession of vast terraces by which it had been approached from the head of the gulf of Akaba.

¹ Num. xiv. 45.

² Jud. i. 17.

³ Dr. Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. i. pp. 291-295.

⁴ The word *Arab* comes from the same root—meaning, therefore, an inhabitant of the waste or wilderness.

Judah on the north to the edge of the "great and terrible wilderness"¹ on the south.² On the east it fringes the west side of the Arabah, with a line of cliffs and hills, in some places 1,400 feet high, seamed into tremendous gorges by the torrents which rush, after storms, from the table-land above. Over against these on the opposite side of the Arabah, rises the long line of the Mountains of Edom, running in the same way, nearly north and south. On the western side of the Negeb the descent to the Maritime Plain is more gradual, but there, also, the country is cut up into a great number of wadys. A broad chain of hills extends south-west from Hebron to the cliffs facing the desert of the Tih, through the centre of the country, while successive terraces rising towards the north stretch across it, till, at Sebaita or Hormah, hills cover the whole landscape, passing, gradually, northwards, into the mountains of Judea. The Israelites had thus as their temporary home a region of rolling plains, in successive gigantic steps, in the centre of the land; partly arable, but mostly pastoral: hills rising here and there, on their edges, to 1,800 or even 2,000 feet³ above the sea, and overlooking the whole land, far and near.

The present condition of this district shows a striking contrast to that which marked it in early ages. It has no population but a few tribes of wandering Arabs; boasts of no cultivated tracts, only two inhabited villages,⁴ and seems as if it could never have supported any considerable community. Yet even in the Wady Garaijeh, which separates the plateau of the Tih, with its edge of cliffs 400 feet high, from the Negeb, there are

¹ Deut. viii. 15. *The Negeb*, by Wilton, p. 22.

² Jud. i. 17.

³ Prof. Palmer's map. *Desert of the Exodus*.

⁴ Conder's *Tent Work*, p. 242.

the remains of a small fortress of unburnt bricks and stems of acacia trees, showing that, though now scorched and bare, the soil was once rich in wood.¹ In the Wady Lussân, north of this, are extensive traces of terrace cultivation; long low walls, very carefully built, skirt the hill side, with provision for regulating the irrigation, and distributing the water collected after the rains. Wady El Ain, also, has strong dams thrown across it for this object. Everywhere, the hills are marked by the ruins of ancient towns or villages and even of many considerable cities, often containing well-preserved cisterns or reservoirs; and miles of hill-sides and valleys are covered with small stone heaps in regular swathes, along which vines were trained, and which still retain the name of "teleilât el anab," or grape mounds. The spies could thus have procured the clusters they brought to the camp, without carrying them from such a distance as would be necessary in our day; in fact they might have gathered them near Kadesh. In Joshua,² indeed, a list of no fewer than twenty-nine cities of the Negeb is given, where now there is only desolation. Neglect alone has caused this change, by letting the waters supplied by the rains go to waste.

Thus, in the days of Moses, this region must have been much better fitted to sustain a great population, like that of Israel, than could be imagined from its present sterility. Nor was it wanting in local interest, as the home of the patriarch fathers. Beersheba, with the tamarisk grove planted by Abraham, lay to the north of Kadesh; while not far off was Jebel Yalad, in which Mr. Wilton sees the site

¹ The Egyptian monuments have a picture of Debir in the Negeb, showing it embosomed in trees, with a stream flowing below the hill on which it stood. See vol i. p. 350.

² Josh. xv. 21-32.

of Eltolad,¹ a town of the Negeb in Joshua's list—the scene, as he thinks, of the birth of Isaac, and named after the great event.² Close to Kadesh also, on the other side of the hills, to the west, lay Wady Jesur, apparently the Gerar of Isaac, now, as then, partly arable, partly pastoral, and showing still, in every direction, the remains of long ranges of low stone walls, probably once the divisions of cultivated fields.³

Nor was animal life wanting. Deer resorted to the pools of rainwater left in the torrent beds, where they could quench their thirst.⁴ Doves bred in multitudes in the precipitous sides of the gorges through which these torrents rushed down from the high ground.⁵ The lion came up only too often from “the swellings of Jordan, against the habitation of the strong,”⁶ that is, from the thickets of the Jordan valley to “the rock pastures” of the Negeb. Even at this day, indeed, it seems not unknown in these parts, for Mr. Kinglake thinks he met with the “fresh prints of a lion's foot” in the desert south of Gaza.⁷ The jackal was so abundant that in Joshua's day one of the local “cities” was called Hazar Shual, “the jackal village.”⁸ The horse and the ox were not suited for stony uplands, and hence we never find them mentioned in the Bible in connection with this region, but there were herds of camels, and flocks of sheep and goats; and asses abounded. In every passage respecting the Negeb in which riding is mentioned, the

¹ From its meaning, “born of God,” or “a supernatural birth.”

² *The Negeb*, p. 180.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 240. This description of the Negeb is from Wilton and Palmer.

⁴ Ps. xlii. 1.

⁵ Cant. v. 12.

⁶ Jer. xlix. 19; i. 44.

⁷ *Rothen*, p. 348. He is not supported, however, by authorities generally, in thinking that there are still lions in Palestine.

⁸ Josh. xv. 29; xix. 3.

animal is either an ass—as the cases of Abraham, Achsah, and Abigail—or a camel, as in those of Eliezer, Rebecca, or the 400 Amalekites.¹

Water,² that prime necessity of eastern life, was to be found at all seasons; for the rains sink through the porous chalk soil, and are stopped by the hard limestone beneath. Hence, as we see in the case of Isaac, to sink wells always secures a ready supply.³ There were, moreover, the torrents of the gorges, which could easily be utilized by reservoirs and dams, as was afterwards done so largely in this very region. In spring the hills were a-blaze with flowers, and rich in soft grass; and even in the hot summer there was always pasturage for vast flocks and herds when dispersed into the many wadys. Tristram, indeed, speaks of the number of camels, sheep, and goats, gathered together at a given point in the Negeb, and Lieut. Conder, also, notes their abundance.⁴ “We wished,” adds Tristram, “that those who cannot comprehend how the Israelites had such vast flocks and herds in the wilderness could have witnessed the gathering of to-day, and how, in a few hours, thousands upon thousands of cattle could be collected in a given track.”⁵

¹ Gen. xxii. 3, 5; xxiv. 10, 61–64. Josh. xv. 18. 1 Sam xxv. 18, 20, 23; xxx. 17.

² Speaking of Arab songs, Burton says: “If you listen to the words, you will surely hear allusions to bright verdure, cool shades, bubbling rills, or something which, hereabouts, man hath not, and yet which his soul desires.”—*Meccah and Medinah*, p. 100.

³ There are no springs in the Negeb, from the porousness of the soil. The waters gather in the wadys, under the surface, when the limestone is reached, and flow towards the sea as underground streams. *Tent Work*, p. 242.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

⁵ *The Land of Israel*, p. 384.

The years of wandering would have their bright and cloudless weeks and months; but they would be marked also in these uplands by the blinding sandstorms and overpowering sirocco winds of summer, while the elevation of the plateau would bring storms of snow and sleet in winter.¹ Nor would these be the only troubles and discipline of the wilderness. The number of the Israelites after the forty years was nearly 2,000 men less than at their commencement,² in spite of the births during that long time. That this did not rise from want of food we may be certain, for they had the manna till they reached Canaan. Like many Arab tribes, they may have sown grain yearly in suitable parts,³—palm trees here and there would aid; their herds were large; they had wine to drink at the feast of the golden calf;⁴ they had bread and oil;⁵ they were always near the populous mountains of Edom, and were able to buy from the Edomites “meat and water,” paying for both in money;⁶ and when commanded at last to cross the Jordan, they had such abundance of food of various kinds that the whole host could “prepare victuals”

¹ *Palmer, passim. Wilton, passim.*

² Num. i. 2, 3; xxvi. 51.

³ Gen. xxvi. 12; xxxvii. 7. The clothing of the Hebrews was secured by their possession of herds and flocks, the hair and wool of which would, of course, be spun and woven by the women. There is nothing contrary to this in Deut. viii. 4; xxix. 4, 5. The words, “waxes not old upon,” should in both passages be read, “fell not from off;” *i.e.*, they were never without suitable clothing.

⁴ When the people are said (Exod. xxxii. 6) to have held a religious feast, the consecrated flesh and wine for sacrifices and drink-offerings are implied: “They ate and drank.”

⁵ Lev. viii. 2, 26, 31; ix. 4; x. 12; xxiv. 5. Num. vii. 13.

⁶ Deut. ii. 6.

three days before, to be ready.¹ It seems beyond question, therefore, that a destruction of life so vast could only have been caused by severe and frequent wars, often at first unsuccessful, with the races to whom the Negeb belonged, or with those on its borders. In such a school their manly virtues would be developed; nor is it too much to say that such a training alone explains how the sons were, at last, under Joshua, so warlike, as compared with their fathers.²

Only a very few glimpses are afforded of the history of the next thirty-seven years: but, few though they be, they throw interesting light on the wilderness life. On one occasion³ the son of an Israelitish woman and of an Egyptian, one of the "mixed multitude" which had left the Nile Valley with the Hebrews, had wandered from his own quarters in the camp into those of the Israelites,⁴ which he had no right to enter; the offspring of such marriages as that of his parents being excluded from the community till the third generation.⁵ A dispute having risen between him and a Hebrew, the unfortunate man allowed himself, in the heat of passion, to blaspheme the name of God, and was at once brought before Moses for the crime. The penalty was terrible, for the offence struck at the root of the national constitution, and imperilled the very object of the separation of Israel from other nations. No similar case had risen before, so that

¹ Josh. i. 11.

² See art. in *Studien und Kritiken*, by Vaihinger, 1871, p. 771.

³ Lev. xxiv. 10.

⁴ Each tribe was encamped by itself (Num. ii. 2). The Targum of Palestine says, the offender sought to pitch his tent in the tribe of Dan, and on being resisted took the case to the "House of Judgment," where it was decided against him; and that then, in the rage at his defeat, he committed the crime alleged.

⁵ Deut. xxiv. 7, 8.

a special law had to be made for it ; but this was presently announced in the name of Jehovah Himself. The blasphemer was to be led outside the camp and stoned to death ; those who had heard his words laying their hands on his head,¹ and throwing the first stones, as responsible for the truth of the charge against him ;² the crowd around then joining in the execution.

It is striking to notice, that in the Hebrew text it is only said that he blasphemed THE NAME ;³ what that was being left unwritten. On this omission the later Jews grounded their prohibition of the use of the word Jehovah, under almost any circumstances. "Those who utter the name of God according to its sound," says the Talmud, "have no position in the world to come."⁴ The priests might use it in the temple services, but even they were not to let it cross their lips elsewhere.⁵ In the Hebrew Bible the vowels of the word Adonai—Lord—are placed below it, and in the Greek it is always suppressed, the word Kurios, "Lord," being used in its place ; a practice followed by the English version. Traces of this aversion to utter the Divine name occur early in the Old Testament, as where it is withheld from Jacob at Peniel,⁶ and from Manoah.⁷

This dread of using the special name of the Deity characterized antiquity from the earliest ages, through the belief that it expressed the awful mysteries of the

¹ See Lev. i. 4 ; xxiv. 14. ² Deut. xvii. 7. ³ Lev. xxiv. 11, 16.

⁴ *Sanhedrin*, x. § 1. The Septuagint reads, "Whosoever shall name the name of the Lord shall die" (Num. xxiv. 16) ; and Philo says, "He who utters the name of the Lord at an unfit time shall die." (ii. 166).

⁵ Buxtorff's *Heb. and Chald. Lex.*, p. 2432.

⁶ Gen. xxxii. 29.

⁷ Judges xiii. 18. "Secret," there = "Wonderful." Josephus speaks of the name of God as not to be uttered. *Ant.*, II. xii. 4.

Divine essence, and was too holy to be breathed. Thus the "name of God is in the Angel" who was to lead Israel through the wilderness,¹ and the temple was to be built for "the Name,"² but in neither case is it given. Such reverence, just in itself, early led, however, to many superstitions. The knowledge of the secret name of any god or angel was thought to convey, to him who knew it, the control of their supernatural powers. He who discovered the hidden name of the god Ea, of the Accadians, became invested with attributes higher than those of the gods.³ The name, in fact, was regarded as a personification of its owner, with which was indissolubly connected the possession of his essential characteristics. Thus the Romans used the word "numen" for a divinity, by a mere play on the word "nomen," "a name." Among the Egyptians there was a god whose name it was unlawful to utter;⁴ and it was forbidden to name or to speak of the supreme guardian divinity of Rome.⁵ Even to mention a god's name in taking an oath was deemed irreverent.⁶ In the Book of Henoch⁷ a secret magic power is ascribed to the Divine Name, and "it upholds all things which are." Men learned it through the craft of the evil angel, Kesbeel, who, in heaven, before he was cast out, gained it by craft from Michael, its original guardian. Nor did the ancient world, alone, regard a name as thus potent. The Scandinavians firmly believed that if that

¹ Exod. xxiii. 21.

² 2 Sam. vii. 13: "He shall build an house for My Name."

³ Lenormant, *La Magie*, p. 41.

⁴ Cic; *De Nat. Deor.*, iii. 22.

⁵ Plutarch, *Quæst. Rom.*, 6.

⁶ *Schol. Aristoph., Ran.*, 1421.

⁷ *Das Buch Henoch*, Kap. lxix.

of a fighting warrior were spoken out loud, his strength would immediately depart from him, for his name was his very essence.¹ At this day, moreover, the true name of the Emperor of China is kept a profound secret, never to be uttered—perhaps to impress his subjects with his unapproachable elevation above common mortals.²

Another incident recorded throws a strong light on the strictness with which the laws given at Sinai were enforced; doubtless to stamp ineffaceably on the heart of the nation the moral lessons intended. A man was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day,³ and was instantly brought before Moses. There was no question as to the penalty, which had been already declared to be death;⁴ but it was not yet disclosed how it was to be inflicted. Now, however, it was made known that the offender was to be taken outside the camp and stoned to death, and this was forthwith done.

But individual declensions, inevitable in the establishment of a religion so pure and lofty, among such a people and in such an age, were not the only difficulties with which Moses had to contend. The great religious revolution, which had substituted the priesthood of Aaron and the services of the Levites for those of the fathers and elder sons of the community, had not been effected without opposition, and this came to a head, at last, in a movement which might easily have been perilous. Korah, a Levite, and Dathan and Abiram, of the tribe of Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, rose against Moses, after having gained over to their conspiracy no fewer than two

¹ *Good Words*, 1865, p. 620. See on this curious subject, further, Ewald, *Geschichte*, vol. iv. pp. 254 ff.

² Remusat, *Nouv. Mél. As.*, vol. ii. p. 6.

³ Num. xv. 32–36.

⁴ Exod. xxxi. 14, 15; xxxv. 2.

hundred and fifty chiefs of the congregation—heads of tribal divisions—and, as such, their representatives in the popular assembly of Israel.¹ The matter was the more serious as Korah was a full cousin of Moses and Aaron—Izhar,² his father, being Amram's brother.³ He now claimed priestly rights for himself, and his family; his two hundred and fifty supporters, who were, very probably, for the most part, first-born sons, demanding them also.⁴ Dathan and Abiram, as Reubenites, had apparent ground for claiming worldly rather than spiritual advantages from their descent.⁵ With them, for the moment, was associated another Reubenite—On—but he appears to have presently withdrawn from their plans, for his name does not appear again.

The whole company of the disaffected having gathered together before Moses and Aaron, stated their grievance. "The two took too much upon them, seeing that all the congregation were holy, every one of them, and that Jehovah was among them: why did they lift up themselves above the congregation?" It was a protest against the new priesthood and Levitical service, and a demand that things should be restored to their old position in these respects. But Moses met them calmly. Next day would show which side was right. Let the whole company present themselves with lighted censers, and those whom God should choose would be "holy." They took too much on them, he added. God had honoured the tribe of Levi by bringing it near Him, to do the service of His Tabernacle: would they seek the priesthood as well?

Dismissing them thus for a time, Dathan and Abiram,

¹ Num. xvi. 2. This is implied in the Hebrew words used.

² Izhar = fresh oil.

³ Exod. vi. 18.

⁴ Exod. xxii. 29.

⁵ Gen. xlix. 3.

who had kept aloof, were next summoned to appear before him. Instead of complying, however, they repelled the command with bitter reproaches against Moses. "Was it a small thing," they asked, "that he had brought them up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill them in the wilderness? and would he now go on even to play the prince over them? Besides, where was the grand country he was to get for them? where were the fields and vineyards he had promised? Would he put out their eyes to keep them from seeing how little his words were in keeping with his deeds? We will not come!"¹

A few hours, however, crushed this threatening revolt. On Korah and his company presenting themselves at the entrance of the Tabernacle with their censers, "fire from the Lord" burst out on them, and destroyed the whole two hundred and fifty.² Nor was the end of Dathan and Abiram, who remained in their tents, less tragical, for a miraculous cleft in the earth suddenly opened beneath them, and they and all belonging to them disappeared for ever. The danger, however, was not over even yet. The whole camp had sympathised with the attempt to restore the old state of things for which the Levitical reforms had been substituted, and now openly clamoured against Moses and Aaron for having, as they asserted, "killed the people of Jehovah." But this, in the end, added to the triumph of the new constitution; for a divinely-sent plague presently broke out in the camp, and was stayed only by Aaron rushing with his kindled

¹ This is a close paraphrase of the verses, Num. xvi. 13, 14. The Targum of Palestine says, "Wilt thou blind the eyes of the men of that land, that thou mayest overcome them."

² The children of Korah did not suffer. Exod. vi. 24. Num. xxvi. 11. 1 Chron. xx. 1. 2 Chron. xx. 19.

censer between the living and the dead, and thus making an atonement for the sin of the rebels. In all, with the number who perished with Korah, nearly 15,000 had already fallen. Henceforward, the rights of the Levites and of the priesthood were unchallenged during the whole history of the nation. The crisis, however, was not suffered to pass away without a memorial which should keep it from being forgotten. The heads of the twelve tribes, including Levi,¹ were distinguished by carrying a rod or sceptre of office. These were now ordered to be laid before Jehovah in the Tabernacle, that it might be shown by a miraculous sign in connection with them, how undoubted was the Divine approval of the choice of Aaron and the Levites as the ecclesiastical officials of the host. Nor could there be any hesitation, for, on the morrow, it was found that the "rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."² Henceforth, by command, it was laid before the Ark as a standing testimony of God's will.³ The effect of such a wonder, added to all that had preceded, was overpowering. Far and near through the whole camp only one cry was heard: "We die, we perish, we all perish: whoever comes at all near the dwelling-place of Jehovah dieth: shall we ever have finished with dying?"⁴

It is to be noticed that the Divine instructions to Aaron

¹ Ephraim and Manasseh had been reckoned as one tribe—that of Joseph.

² Num. xvii. 8.

³ The fact that Aaron's rod was thus said to have been laid before the Ark is a strong proof of the historical truth of the incident. For how could an appeal have been thus made to evidence, which at any time could have been shown to be imaginary, if the rod were not thus preserved?

⁴ *Schlottmann and Driver.*

respecting the special duties of the priests and Levites are inserted immediately after the account of this crisis,¹ as if, till then, nothing had been definitely settled.

Various laws demanded by new and unforeseen exigencies seem, indeed, to have been framed and published from time to time, during we know not how long after Israel left Sinai. In all nations it must be so, for no legislation can anticipate the requirements of the future in detail. General principles were laid down in advance, but as in the case of the blasphemer, the Sabbath breaker, and the numerous isolated enactments in Numbers and Deuteronomy, new laws or more explicit definitions of those already given, must have been added to the statute book, year after year. And this continued with the Hebrews as with other nations; for, just as the laws of William the Conqueror, or of Elizabeth, are necessarily, in many respects, obsolete in our day, from the lapse of time, and changes in national customs and life, and need to be modified to suit the present; so the Mosaic laws, in the course of ages, grew largely out of date and incapable of execution, though the great principles on which they rested remained the same. The whole system of the Rabbinical laws of later Judaism, in fact, sprang from the desire to adapt the ancient laws of the Pentateuch to the times, by silently allowing many particulars to remain in the oblivion into which they had long fallen, and developing others only too elaborately.

The effect of the repeated risings of the people as a whole, or of sections of them, as in the case of Korah, must have weighed heavily on the spirit of their great leader. He saw all his dreams of guiding them into the Promised Land dissipated, for he was an old man, and the sentence dooming the existing generation to die in the

¹ Num. xviii.

wilderness virtually included himself: already over eighty, he could not hope to survive another race of his fellows? With all his sublime trust in Jehovah, so often shown, and embodied so grandly in the religious history of the nation on which he impressed his spirit, he, at last, for a moment despaired, and fell into the same distrust as had so often grieved his soul in others.¹ The people were camping somewhere in the neighbourhood of the eastern hills of the Negeb, and once more suffered greatly from want of water; the wells and torrent beds yielding too little, or perhaps having failed at the time from drought. Loud reproaches for being led from Egypt to such a wilderness rose on every side, and the old laments were heard, that they had not died with their brethren, who had already perished by the way. They forgot the rock smitten at Rephidim, and the manna of each day, and unhappily influenced even Moses and Aaron for the instant. As might have been expected from their Divine Protector, who had cared for them so long, a command presently came that the two leaders should speak to the bare crag,² in the sight of all the people, and water would flow from it. But the lofty, immoveable trust of Moses in the Divine word was for the moment shaken.

“They angered him at the waters of strife,
 So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes;
 Because they rebelled against His (God’s) Spirit,³
 So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.”⁴

Obedying the command, he was yet uncertain and hesitating as to the result, and openly showed his doubts; as if the Almighty could not do whatever He pleased, or

¹ Num. xx. 10-12.

³ *Lengerke*, p. 569.

² The word is “crag.”

⁴ Ps. cvi. 32, 33.

would not fulfil His word. "Can I bring water," cried he, in the hearing of all, "from the dry, solid rock?"¹ He had been commanded to speak only, and the water would flow; but in his excitement, he smote the hard stone. Water came as had been promised, but the momentary distrust brought a final and formal exclusion of the great leader and his brother from the land they had so longed to enter.

¹ *Knobel*, on Num. xx. 10. Moses smites the rock twice, and not once only, as if the result depended on human action in part, and not on the power of God alone.





CHAPTER XII.

THE EVE OF THE CONQUEST.

A LONG interval of thirty-seven years is passed over without notice between the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of the twentieth chapter of Numbers.¹ At their close the discipline of the wilderness had done its work. For a generation Israel had led a nomadic life, passing from place to place as pasturage invited, though Kadesh had been their centre. The men who had come from Egypt gradually died out, and their sons had grown, under the inspiration of Moses, and those associated with him, into a strong and vigorous nation. He had given them a constitution which was democratic in the noblest sense, for every Israelite, whether poor or rich, was equal before the law and was a free man. They had been taught to feel themselves the people of God; and to treat them like slaves, as the Pharaohs treated the Egyptians, was a crime against Jehovah.² Moses, though their leader and dictator, bore himself as only the instrument and voice of God, from whom their laws came, and to whom, supremely, they owed spiritual and temporal obedience. All the legislation given them had been

¹ As the long residence in Egypt is similarly unnoticed.

² Bunsen's *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 189

based on the recognition of the highest moral law, and embodied the purest and loftiest conceptions of duty to God and man. Love of their neighbour, brotherly fellowship, equality as Israelites, gentleness, and absolute uprightness, were the ideal he had set before them. Such maxims and laws were impressed on them till they became instinctively recognized, however at times contravened or forgotten. In the words of the prophet, these years saw the kindness of their youth and the love of their espousals to Jehovah,¹ when, as His betrothed bride, they followed the Pillar of His Presence through the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.² In the song of Moses we read how—

Jehovah found His people in the waste;
 And in the wilderness, and howling steppes
 He compassed them about, He tended them,
 He guarded them as the apple of His eye.
 As the eagle watches over her nest;
 Hovers over her young, spreads wide her wings,
 Takes them and bears them on her feathers;
 So Jehovah, only, led them,
 And no strange god was with them.³

Nor were their manly virtues less strengthened and developed than their religious ideas. The energies called forth by the necessities and perils of a desert life; the quickening breath of the pure air of the wilderness; a love of freedom kindled into a passion by its enjoyment for a generation; the communion with nature in its silent vastness and sublimity, bringing them face to face

¹ Lengerke acutely remarks (*Kenaar*, p. 385), that the imagery of the espousal of Jehovah to Israel after the Exodus presupposes their having before that time been devoted, in a large measure, to other gods.

² Jer. ii. 2. ³ Deut. xxxii. 8, 10. *Knobel, Graetz, and Lange.*

with God and their own thoughts; the interdependence fostered by common action as a people; the free constitution they enjoyed, and, above all, the grand religious conceptions which roused all that was noble in the soul, had effaced the servile taint of Egypt, called out the slumbering qualities of the race, and restored them to the vigorous tone of their shepherd ancestors.

But it was necessary that the wandering life should end, now it had served its purpose, else they might permanently sink into desert tribes, like those around them. At last, therefore, the command was given to prepare for taking possession of the long-promised land of Canaan. How to reach it, however, was as yet undetermined. Approach from the south was barred by the elaborate preparations of the inhabitants; though a successful attack on the king of Arad,¹ a chief of the Negeb, who had taken part in their defeat at Hormah, in Zephath, long years before, showed that the present generation were very different men from their fathers.

But the long years that had passed since leaving Egypt, had told on the strongest and most vigorous survivors of the old Egyptian times. Hitherto, the immediate circle of their great leader had been unbroken; but now it was to render its first tribute to death. Moses and Aaron were to be spared to each other a little longer—only a little—but Miriam was to leave them. She died towards the close of the wanderings, at Kadesh,² and was buried there, as Josephus says, with great pomp,³ and amidst a general sorrow, which was expressed, as in the case of her brothers afterwards, by a public mourning for thirty days. Older than Moses, she could hardly have been less than 120 when she died; but henceforth

Num. xxi. 21-24.

² Num. xx. 1.

³ *Ant.*, IV. iv. 6.

the two brothers were alone, and it was certain that ere long even they must be parted.

The direct route northwards being impracticable, the next best lay up the broad sunken plain of the Arabah, to the southern end of the Dead Sea, where they could pass round the foot of the mountains of Edom into Moab; which, with the country of the Ammonites, extended along the east side of the Jordan. The peoples of all three were related, by descent, to the Hebrews, and Moses might expect that friendly feelings would be shown him and his host, since he only wished to pass quietly through their territory, and had no intention of disturbing them. He therefore appealed to Edom for permission to cross its northern edge, promising to injure nothing, and to keep strictly to the beaten tracks. But the fear of even a peaceful invasion by such a multitude expressed itself in a refusal, accompanied with a display of force, to be used if needed.

It only remained, therefore, to journey down the Arabah to the head of the gulf of Akaba, a branch of the Red Sea, and turning, thence, round the south end of the mountains of Edom, to march northwards towards Canaan, outside their eastern slope. But a melancholy interruption to their progress was at hand. High above the hills in which now stand the wondrous rock-hewn ruins of Petra, the lofty double peak of Mount Hor is seen to the north-west. To use the words of Ritter, it towers in lonely majesty, rising high aloft into the blue sky, like a huge, grand, but shattered rock city, with vast cliffs, perpendicular walls of stone, pinnacles and naked peaks of every shape.¹ On one of the heights of this great natural altar Aaron was destined to breathe his last, in the arms of his son and successor, Eleazar, and beside

¹ Ritter, *Erskunde*, vol. xiv. p. 1127.

the true and loving brother, who had been his guiding star through life. The sublime mountain was a fitting scene for the death of such a man. That he so naturally took the position becoming him, as the faithful instrument and conscientious councillor of his still more illustrious brother, and as the interpreter and representative of his grander spirit,¹ shows his greatness; his lofty piety has its record in his life as a whole.

No incident could be more touching than the ascent of the two venerable brothers and the son, on such an errand. The lonely height; the robes taken from the dying man that they might be put on Eleazar, as the successor in his pontificate; the very landscape on which his eyes now rested, move us. If they climbed to the top they would see around them a wilderness of craggy summits, the very image of desolation, sinking into a maze of fathomless defiles, which formed the ancient territory of Edom. To the west, the valley of the Arabah lay at their feet, like the bed of a vast river, encumbered with shoals of sand, and sprinkled over with stunted shrubs; beyond, stretched out the desert, in which they had wandered for now thirty-eight years. To the north, the rounded hills of the Promised Land, fading away like waves in the distance—those hills so ardently longed for, which neither Moses nor he were ever to tread. To the south, the Arabah stretched on towards the Red Sea, marking the future path of the tribes, when they would “compass the land of Edom.” To the east, the sky rested on a magnificent range of yellow mountains, through the valley between which and Edom, Israel would presently march northwards to the conquest of its long-sought inheritance.

¹ Bunsen, *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 214.

A poor tomb on the top of the mountain is honoured by the Mahommedans as that of Aaron.¹ It has been built on the site of a much better edifice, of Christian origin, some of the mosaics of which are still seen in the floor of the present structure. If the great high priest lie here, his body is deep down, out of sight, below the floor, though, indeed, no one can believe that such a vault could have been excavated by Moses and Eleazar.²

¹ For a description of Mount Hor see Stephen's *Incidents*, Robinson, Stanley, Smith's *Dictionary*, Kitto's *Cyclo. of Bib. Lit.*, Bartlett's *Forty Days in the Desert*, etc.

² The death of Aaron has been made the subject of touching legends by the Rabbis. One of them is as follows: "Moses was full of grief when the word of the Lord came to him that Aaron, his brother, was to die. That night he had no rest, and when it began to dawn towards morning, he rose and went to the tent of Aaron, who was much surprised to see his brother come so early, and said, 'Wherefore art thou come?'"

"Moses answered, 'All night long have I been troubled, and have had no sleep, for certain things in the Law came upon me, and they seemed to me heavy and unendurable. I have come to thee that I may relieve my mind.' So they opened the book together; and at every sentence they said, 'that is holy, and great, and righteous.' Soon they came to the history of Adam; and Moses stayed from reading when they arrived at the Fall, and he cried bitterly. 'O Adam, thou hast brought death into the world!'"

"Aaron said, 'Why art thou so troubled thereat, my brother? Is not death the way to Eden?' 'It is, however, very painful,' said Moses. Think, also, that thou and I must some day die. How many years thinkest thou we shall live? Aaron. 'Perhaps twenty.' Moses. 'Oh, no! not so many.' Aaron. 'Then fifteen.' Moses. 'No, my brother, not so many.' Aaron. 'Then surely it must be five?' Moses. 'I say again, not so many.' Then said Aaron, hesitating, 'Is it then one?' And Moses said, 'Not so much.'

"Full of anxiety and alarm, Aaron kept silence. Then said Moses gently, 'O my beloved! would it not be good to say of

After a stay of thirty days under the shadow of Mount Hor, in public mourning for Aaron, the camp at last

thee as it was said of Abraham, that he was gathered to his fathers in peace?' Aaron was silent.

"Then said Moses, 'If God were to say that thou shouldest die in an hundred years, what wouldst thou say?' Aaron said, 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. *Moses.* 'And if God were to say to thee that thou shouldest die this year, what wouldst thou answer?' *Aaron.* 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.' *Moses.* 'And if He were to call thee to-day, what wouldst thou say?' *Aaron.* 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.' 'Then,' said Moses, 'arise and follow me.'

"At that same hour went forth Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar, his son: they ascended unto Mount Hor, and the people looked on, nothing doubting, for they knew not what was to take place. Then said the Most High to His angels, 'Behold the new Isaac: he follows his younger brother, who leads him to death.'

"When they had reached the summit of the mountain, there opened before them a cavern. They went in, and found a death-bed prepared by the hands of angels. Then Moses cried out in grief, 'Woe is me! we were two, when we comforted our sister in her death; in this, thy last hour, I am with thee, to solace thee: when I die, who will comfort me?' Then a voice was heard from heaven, 'Fear not; God Himself will be with thee.'

"On one side stood Moses, on the other Eleazar, and they kissed the dying man on the brow, and took from off him his priestly vestments, to clothe Eleazar, his son, with them. They took off one portion of the sacred apparel, and laid that on Eleazar; and as they stripped Aaron a silvery veil of cloud sank over him like a pall, and covered him. Aaron seemed to be asleep. Then Moses said, 'My brother, what dost thou feel?' 'I feel nothing but the cloud that envelopes me,' answered he. After a little pause Moses said again, 'My brother, what dost thou feel?' He answered feebly, 'The cloud surrounds me, and bereaves me of all joy.'

"And the soul of Aaron was parted from his body. And as it went up Moses cried once more, 'Alas, my brother! what dost thou feel?' And the soul replied, 'I feel such joy that I would

moved southwards, and having rounded the mountains of Edom at the head of the gulf of Akaba—not to be revisited by Israelitish wanderers till Solomon made Ezion-geber the port of his commercial navy—turned northwards towards Canaan. But the way was difficult and trying, and the spirits of the people again fell. Water ran short for the vast multitude, and the manna was murmured at as only “miserable bread.”¹ Once more, in forgetfulness of the supply of all their wants for so many years, bitter reproaches rose against God and Moses. But the region itself provided a terrible punishment for such disloyalty and rebellion. Venomous serpents abounded in it, and spread terror and death, till a remedy was provided in the “brazen serpent,” raised upon a banner pole by Moses, by Divine command.² A strange confusion of texts has led to the common idea that they were “flying serpents” that thus assailed Israel. But there is not a word in Numbers or Deuteronomy of their being so.³ It is Isaiah who speaks of “flying serpents”⁴ but without any reference to the

it had come to me sooner. Then cried Moses, ‘Oh thou blessed, peaceful death! Oh, may such a death be my lot!’

“Moses and Eleazar came down alone from the mountain, and the people wailed because Aaron was no more. But the coffin of Aaron rose, borne by angels, in the sight of the whole congregation, whilst the angels sang, ‘The priest’s lips have kept knowledge, and have spoken truth.’”*

¹ Num. xxi. 5, light = miserable.

² The brazen serpent, it is well known, was used by our Lord Himself as a type of His atoning death for mankind (John iii. 14). In both cases faith in the remedy provided was the means of salvation. “Pole” is always = banner pole. *Englishman’s Heb. Concord.*

³ Num. xxi. 6–8. Deut. viii. 15. ⁴ Isa. xiv. 29; xxx. 6.

* Baring Gould’s *Old Test. Legends*, vol. ii. pp. 127–130.

incidents of the desert. He perhaps refers to a popular fancy respecting the flying lizard—*draco volans*—which has a membrane between its fore and hind legs, so that it can glide, like the flying squirrel, from one spot or branch to another; for even in the days of Herodotus these were spoken of as “flying serpents.”¹ But they are perfectly harmless, and, besides, are not found in the Negeb, to which the passage relates. He may, however, refer to the springing of the desert snakes, though even this is not necessary to be understood, since the Septuagint translates the word “flying” by “deadly,” while the Vulgate substitutes “burning.”²

It is highly interesting to find that in the very neighbourhood in which Israel was then encamped, travellers mention the existence of serpents in great numbers. Thus, Captain Frazer tells us that “all the Arabs say there are *flying serpents* here, three feet long, very venomous, their bite deadly; they have no wings, but *make great springs*.”³ Mr. Churton, when south-west of the Dead Sea, fell in with a large *red coloured* serpent, which came out of a hollow tree, and was declared by the Arabs to be poisonous.⁴ Burckhardt writes: “the sand showed everywhere tracks of these reptiles. My guide told me they were very numerous in these parts, and that the fishermen were in such dread of them, that they put out their fire each night before going to sleep, lest it should attract them.” In a similar strain Schubert tells us, that “a large and very mottled snake

¹ *Herod.*, ii. 74; iii. 109.

² On the subject, see Gesenius, *Isaia*, pp. 496 ff. Smith's *Dict.*, art. *Serpents*. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*. Wilton's *Negeb*.

³ Forster's *Sinai*, pp. 137, 138.

⁴ *Land of the Morning*, p. 130.

was brought us, marked with fiery red spots and stripes. From its teeth it evidently belonged to one of the most poisonous kinds. The Bedouins say that these creatures, of which they are in terror, are very numerous in this locality.”¹

From this time the trials of wilderness life may be said to have ended. Crossing “the brook Zered,” a wady shaded by abundant vegetation,² they left Edom and the desert behind them, and entered on the rich uplands of Moab. They had wanted for nothing during the past, but, yet, to reach a region of flowing water must have put new life into the whole host. The order of the day to cross the brook—“Up and cross the stream Zered!”³—was an event so memorable that it was preserved in “the book of the wars of Jehovah,” that is, of “the Holy Wars,” and has been transcribed thence into the Bible.⁴ They could now dig wells and dip their pitchers in fountains. Ere long they reached the tremendous chasm of the Arnon, “the rushing river,” the first stream they had seen since leaving the Nile. Looking across its width of about three miles from crest to crest, and into its depths over 2,000 feet below,⁵ its sides rich with permanent verdure, and floods of bright water sparkling far underneath, the joy, after a long life in the thirsty and barren wilderness, must have been indescribable. They were, also, opposite Engedi, on the other side of the Dead Sea, and could follow the waters

¹ Quoted by Bunsen, *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 217.

² Deut. ii. 13, 14.

³ The brook Zered is identified by Palmer and Tristram as the Wady el Ahsa, at the very south of the Dead Sea. *Land of Moab*, p. 50.

⁴ Deut. ii. 13. Num. xxi. 13–15. *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 317.

⁵ Tristram's *Land of Moab*, 126.

in their steep descent down the wild and rich sandstone gorge to the blue waves. They must have crossed, however, far to the east, where the stream is yet inconsiderable, for they had to sink wells to add to the water supply. But the joy of being able to do so in a country never dry and barren like the desert, was a great event, celebrated in joyous songs, one of which, doubtless commemorating the digging of the first well, known, ages after, as the "Well of the Heroes,"¹ by the chiefs of the camp, is happily still preserved.

Spring up, O well—sing ye to it!
The well which princes digged,
Which nobles of the people hollowed out:
Rulers with their rods of authority
And with their staves!²

The arrival in Moab marks, indeed, the first outburst of Hebrew poetry. Ordinary words would no longer suffice to give expression to the joy at entering on fertile regions, and leaving the desert behind them.

Having been expressly forbidden to injure Moab or Ammon, as descendants of Lot,³ envoys were now sent to the former, as they had been sent to Edom, asking permission to pass quietly through their land, and promising that no injury should be done it. The Hebrews had encamped in the "wilderness of Kedemoth,"⁴—a district, on Kiepert's map, about twenty-five miles east of the Dead Sea, and on a line about ten miles south of its head,—and remained there till it should be seen what they were to do. Moab having refused to accede to the proposal, the same request was next sent to Ammon, whose territory lay north of Moab, but with no better result.

A great national calamity, however, that had befallen

¹ Isa. xv. 8. Beer Elim. ² Lengerke's *Kanaan*, p. 577. Num. xxi. 17, 18. ³ Deut. ii. 9; Jud. xi. 17, 18. ⁴ Deut. ii. 26.

the Ammonites some time before, at last came to the help of Moses. The king of the Amorites, Sihon "the Destroyer,"¹ had invaded Ammon and Moab, apparently from Canaan, and wrested from them almost the whole country between the Arnon, on the south, and the Jabbok, which flows into the Jordan, on the north; fixing his capital in the strong fortified city of Heshbon, lying about 3,000 feet² above the level of the Mediterranean, and over 4,000 above the Dead Sea, which is visible from it. To him, as to the others, a friendly message was sent from the camp at Kedemoth, asking a passage through his kingdom; but only to meet another refusal. An entrance to Palestine could now only be gained by war, which Moses would fain have avoided; but the result was decisive. Sihon's army fled, and, as later tradition reports, was slaughtered at a spot called Jahaz, "a place trodden down," where they had crowded in an agony of thirst into the bed of a mountain stream. The whole country between the Arnon and the Jabbok, with Heshbon itself, at once passed into the hands of Israel. Henceforward the Arnon was the boundary of their possessions, only the land south of it being left to Moab.³

The wanderers were now masters of a wide region of splendid upland pastures, intersected by numerous fertile valleys, and abounding in streams. The crossing of the Arnon and the digging of the first well had already kindled the poetry of the camp; but such a conquest as this was a still more worthy theme for their inspiration. The vast tent city of the host therefore soon resounded with songs in praise of the conquerors of

¹ *Lit.*, he who swept all before him.

² *Kiepert's Map.*

³ Num. xxi. 15, 26. Deut. iv. 48.

Sihon, now returning in triumph. 'Taunts and derision of their foe mingled in these strains, of which one has happily come down to us.¹

1st Voice.—[As if calling to the Amorites in derision.]

"Come back (will ye not), to Heshbon!

Build again and restore the city of Sihon!²

For there went forth fire from Heshbon,

A flame from the stronghold of Sihon;

It has consumed the city of Moab;

And the lords of the heights of Arnon!"

2nd Voice.—[As if an Amorite were recounting the former triumph of his people over Moab.]

"Woe to thee Moab! Thou art undone, thou people of Chemosh.

His sons he has given up as fugitives,

And his daughters into captivity,

To the king of the Amorites—Sihon."³

1st Voice.—[Telling the final victory of Israel.]

"We have hurled them down! Heshbon has perished even to Dibon!⁴

We have laid them waste even to Nophah

(We have laid them waste) with fire, to Medeba."

The war spirit now fairly roused, ere long found fresh vent in an expedition northwards under two chiefs,

¹ Num. xxi. 27-30.

² So utterly had it been destroyed that the Israelites themselves had to rebuild it. Num. xxxii. 37.

³ Their god Chemosh being unable longer to protect them.

⁴ Where the Moabite stone was found.

⁵ Lengerke and some others see a hint of these early battles in Numbers xxi. 14, 15, the words from "what He did" being translated as follows:—

"Jehovah took Valeb by storm,

And the streams of Arnon and the outflowing of the waters,

That turn to the dwellings of Ar,*

And bend themselves to the coasts of Moab."†

* That is, the place from which the waters began to descend toward the Dead Sea. Ar Moab is at the junction of the Arnon and several other streams.

† Lengerke's *Kenan*, p. 576.

Jair and Nobah, against Og—"the long-necked"—the Amorite king of Gilead and Bashan. The richness of the whole district was itself sufficient attraction for the invaders, for the oaks of Bashan, and the vast herds of wild cattle that roamed its forest glades and green meadows, were its boast and glory, while the landscapes and pastoral wealth of Gilead were hardly less famous. Lovely natural parks, frequent glades covered with heavy crops of wheat and barley, and with trees and shrubs grouped in charming variety, dark forests forming the background, charm the traveller even now.¹ The great tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, whose hearts delighted in sheep and cattle far more than in agriculture, could not resist such a temptation, and, in league apparently with their kindred people, Ammon, soon overcame every difficulty, and made it their own.

Yet the task was not an easy one, for Edrei—"the strong"—Og's capital, was in ordinary circumstances almost unassailable, since it was, strange to say, built in a hollow artificially scooped out of the top of a hill, which the deep gorge of the Hieromax isolates from the country round.² Its streets may still be seen running in all directions beneath the present town of Adraha. But Kenath, in the district called Argob—"the stony"—was still stronger, for it was built in the crevices of a great island of lava which has split, in cooling, into innumerable fissures, through whose labyrinth no enemy could safely penetrate. In these were its streets and houses, some of which, of a later date, with stone doors, turning on hinges of stone,³ remain till this

¹ Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 562. It is pleasing to think that the Palestine Fund Committee propose the survey of Gilead.

² Riehm, *Edrei*.

³ Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*. Porter's *Giant Cities of Bashan*.

day. It would, indeed, have been perhaps impossible for Israel to have overcome a people so strongly intrenched, but for the presence at the time of vast swarms of hornets, a plague common in Palestine, which drove the population into open ground where they could be attacked.¹ Nor were these the only fastnesses. No fewer than sixty cities "fenced with high walls, gates, and bars,"² had to be taken, but they all fell, sooner or later, before the vigorous assaults of the invaders, and, long afterwards, there might be seen, in the capital of their allies, the Ammonites, one of the trophies of the campaign—the gigantic iron bedstead of King Og, or as some think, the huge sarcophagus³ he had prepared for himself, as was the custom with Canaanite kings.⁴ In a very

¹ Josh. xxiv. 12. There is a town in Josh. xv. 33, called Zoreah—"place of hornets." The furious attack of a swarm of hornets drives cattle and horses to madness. The writer of the article *Hornet*, in Smith's *Dictionary*, thinks the word is used only in a metaphysical sense, to signify the pain and alarm with which the approach of the hosts of Israel would inspire the Canaanites. See also Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 322. A plague of flies forced Sapor to raise the siege of Nisibis, and bees are said by Iamblichus to have put a Babylonian army to flight. The Phasaleans, a Canaanitish people, were also driven permanently from their homes by wasps, or hornets. Bochart's *Hieros.*, vol. ii. pt. 2, chap. 13.

² Deut. iii. 5.

³ Lengerke's *Kanaan*, p. 181.

⁴ *E. g.*, Esmunazer, king of Tyre—whose sarcophagus is now in the Louvre. Shakespeare was not the first who pronounced a curse upon those who should move his bones. M. Roller has deciphered the inscription on the sarcophagus of Esmunazer. Part of it runs thus:—"A curse is pronounced against royal persons or others who shall open this tomb, or lift the tomb which contains me, or transport me in this tomb. They shall not be buried with the dead, they shall not lie in a tomb, they shall not leave any descendants, and the holy gods will deliver

short time great part of the land east of the Jordan, except that voluntarily left in the hands of their kindred people, Ammon, was in their possession, from Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea.¹

The terror of the invaders had now spread far and wide—

The people heard it and trembled,
 Terror seized the inhabitants of Philistia,
 The tribes of Edom were alarmed;
 The princes of Moab shook with fear;
 All the inhabitants of Canaan despaired,
 Fear and dread fell on them;
 At the greatness of Thine arm,
 They were petrified like a stone.²

That the whole of the country east of the Jordan was not conquered at once is, however, evident, from notices of a later date. The complete conquest, like that of the British tribes by the old English, was effected only after generations of warfare. But preparation for the invasion of Western Palestine might forthwith be begun, and, therefore, the camp was pitched, apparently for a long time, in the rich depression of the Jordan, immediately above its entrance into the Dead Sea. The heat of the

them into the hands of their enemies, who will chase them from their country." The *Jewish World* notes, as a curious coincidence in regard to this curse, that the Duke de Luynes bought the sarcophagus, and presented it to the French Government. He and his only son met their deaths in the Papal War, in Italy, in 1859. Again, it was through the instrumentality of the Emperor Napoleon III. that it was brought to Paris, and deposited in the Louvre. He was routed at Sedan, and his body reposes on foreign soil. His son met with an untimely death, far away from his home, and at the hands of his enemies. There is not a descendant left of Napoleon III. or the Duke de Luynes.

¹ Deut. iii. 1-17.

² Exod. xv. 14-16.

deep valley would be intense, but abundant water and careful irrigation covered it with a luxuriant vegetation; for even now a wilderness of garden borders its water-courses, making their edges one of the richest oases in the country. Its name, "the meadow or moist place of the acacias"—Abel Shittim—must, indeed, have been apt, for many acacia trees still grow in the tangled green, chiefly towards the western edge. It was in these sultry groves that Israel was to fall into the sin of Baal-peor; it was here that Balaam saw them, close behind, from the top of the mountain dedicated to that god.¹

With such an enemy encamped on its very borders, the terror of Moab lest all the territory left to it should be overrun, led its king, Balak—"the spoiler"—since he could not hope to overcome Israel in war, to try ghostly weapons against them. It was a universal belief in antiquity that magic spells and incantations, pronounced against individuals or communities, had an irresistible power. The more famous workers in magic arts were, especially, supposed to know formulæ which nothing could withstand;² perhaps the secret name of some god or demon higher than the tutelary divinity of those they were invited to curse. One of these imprecations has fortunately been handed down to us. It runs thus—"Dis-pater, or Jupiter, if thou preferrest that title—or by whatever other name it is lawful to call thee—I conjure thee to fill all this town and army which I name, with flight, terror, and alarm. Baffle the purposes of

¹ Tristram's *Land of Israel* p. 528. "Their tents were pitched from Keferein—or Abel Shittim, 'the meadows of the acacias,' in the north—its watered and marshy glades marking the northern limits of the rich Ghor—to Beth Jeshimoth, probably Ramah, on the southern desert expanse." *Ibid* p. 529.

² See page 339.

those armies, enemies, men, cities or territories which bear arms against us; pouring darkness on them from above. Look on those cities, territories and persons, and their people, of all ages, as accursed and given over to the conditions, whatever they may be, by which enemies can be most utterly devoted to destruction. Thus do I devote them, and I, and those whom I represent—the Roman people and their army—stand for witnesses. If thou permittest me and the legions engaged in this matter, to come safely through it, and this doom be accomplished, I swear to sacrifice to thee, O Mother Earth, and to thee, O Jupiter, three black sheep.”¹ It is also recorded by Plutarch, that before Crassus started on his fatal campaign against the Parthians, “Ateius, running to the gate, when Crassus was come thither, set down a chafing dish with lighted fire in it, and burning incense and pouring libations on it, cursed him with dreadful imprecations, calling upon and naming several strange and horrible deities. For the Romans believe that there is so much virtue in these sacred and ancient rites, that no man can escape the effects of them, and that the utterer himself seldom prospers; so that they are not often used, and only on a great occasion.”² In our own Burmese wars, moreover, the generals of that nation had several magicians with them, who repeatedly cursed our troops; a number of witches being added when the imprecations already made had failed.

Filled with a similar belief in the efficacy of such means of destroying an enemy, Balak sent off in hot haste for a soothsayer of great fame, who lived at Pethor, on the Euphrates; hoping that his incantations might deliver over Israel to Moab as an easy prey, and that it

¹ Macrobi, *Saturnal.*, lib. iii. cap. 9.

² *Plutarch*, iii. 350, *Crassus*.

thus might not only save what remained of its territory, but perhaps regain the lands taken from Sihon and Og, which had formerly belonged to it.

Bileam, or Balaam, "the devourer"—perhaps of books—was an Aramæan by birth, and came from the region where the descendants of Abraham still cherished, more or less purely, the faith of the patriarch; so that he had learned to know of Jehovah from his own people. That he should have shown himself a true prophet, though not of the race of Israel, illustrates the cheering fact that the presence of God has never been limited exclusively to the Church, but that even among the heathen He reveals His Spirit. The characteristics of the inspiration granted him are identical with those of the prophets of Israel. God visits him in the night, or he falls into a trance in which he hears Divine words, and sees prophetic visions, while prostrate on the earth; his outer senses wrapped in ecstasy, but the inner senses of his mind and spirit intent on what was being disclosed to him. His character has always been an enigma. No fidelity could have been more signal than that which he displays to Jehovah, when the Divine purpose to bless Israel is made known. No persuasion, or prospect of reward, can move him to go with Balak's messengers, till God permits him, and no considerations of danger or advantage make him falter in uttering the very words he is commissioned to deliver. Yet St. Peter tells us that he held the truth in unrighteousness,¹ and in Joshua² he is called a *kosēm*—or "diviner"—a word only used of false prophets. We read also that "when he saw that it was good in the eyes of Jehovah to bless Israel, he went not, as before, to seek *enchantments*, but set his face to the wilderness,"³ and he himself expressly says that no

¹ 2 Peter ii. 15.

² Josh. xiii. 22.

³ Num. xxiv. 1.

*enchantment*¹ or *divination*² has power over Israel—language which seems a confession of failure on his own part in their use. It may be that, although sincere in his worship of Jehovah, he joined with it too much heathen superstition; and that while afraid to go against Him, he was yet only too willing in his heart to do so. “He was one of those unstable men,” says an old writer, “whom the Apostle calls ‘double-minded’—an ambidexter in religion, like Redwald, king of the East Saxons, the first who was baptized; who, as Camden relates, had, in the same church, one chapel for the Christian religion, and another for sacrificing to devils. A loaf of the same leaven was our resolute Rufus, who painted God on one side of his shield and the devil on the other, with the desperate inscription in Latin—‘I am ready for either.’”³

In the narrative itself it would almost seem as if this double character might be traced. Nothing can be loftier than the words in which he replies to Balak, when the agonized king, in their meeting, asks him,⁴ “Where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself

¹ The word is *Nahash*, derived from the whispering or muttering of sorcerers, like that of serpents.

² *Kesem*, “the divination of a false prophet.”

Kalisch gives the highest character to Balaam (*Bib. Studies*, vol. i., *Balaam*), but Lengerke shrewdly notes that for one with his knowledge and belief in God, even to have *thought* of cursing Israel, marks an unworthy nature. He adds, “That Jehovah first permitted, then forbade, then again permitted the journey, is only a human way of expressing the Divine relations to men’s thoughts, for ‘God cannot repent’ (chap. xxiii. 19). The meaning is that God was opposed, not to the journey, but to the crafty greed which impelled Balaam to it.” *Kenaan*, p. 584.

³ Ness, *History and Mystery*, vol. i. app. p. 88.

⁴ Micah vi. 5.

before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" In accordance with the terrible custom of his country¹ he was ready, if required, to sacrifice even his eldest son, if it would appease the Divine wrath. Not even the greatest of the old prophets could have given a purer and more spiritual answer to this wild, despairing appeal. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Yet he enters heartily, to all appearance, into the idolatrous spirit of everything round him. He feasts on the flesh of beasts offered to heathen gods, and chooses as the spot on which he builds his first altars, one consecrated to the worship of Baal.² He appears, moreover, to have agreed with Balak in the thoroughly heathen notion that a spell would work from one spot better than from another; and, even in the number of his altars and sacrifices, acts as if he trusted to the magic power of sacred numbers. The Hebrews had only one altar at a given place, but Balaam causes seven to be built together, and offers seven sacrifices—just as, at this day, in India, the number seven generally appears in the sacrifices or offerings of the Hindoos. If poor they will offer seven nuts, limes, plantains, or betel-nuts, or seven measures of rice; or, if they cannot go so high, will at least take care to have an odd number.³ Nor is this the only analogy with heathen customs. "When an Indian king goes forth to battle," we are told, "he makes a sacrifice

¹ 2 Kings iii. 27.

² Num. xxii. 41; xxiii. 1.

³ Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations*.

to the goddess of the royal family, to learn his prospects in the coming struggle, and to bring down a curse on his enemy. For this purpose seven altars are placed in front of the temple, and near them seven vessels filled with water, on each of which are mango leaves, and a cocoa-nut with its tuft. Near each altar is a hole containing fire. The victims, which may be seven, fourteen, or twenty-one, and consist of buffaloes, rams, or cocks, are then brought forward, and a strong man strikes off the head of each victim at a blow ; after which the carcass is thrown into the burning pit, with prayers and incantations. The priest then proceeds to the temple and offers incense, returning after some time and declaring with frantic gestures, what will be the result of the battle. Should the response be favourable to the inquiring prince, the priest then takes some of the ashes from each hole, and throwing them in the direction of the enemy, pronounces on him the most terrible imprecations.”¹

The story as recorded in Numbers is one of striking interest. The two journeys of the messengers of the civilized Moab and of the Bedouin Midian, to the distant Euphrates, for help against the mighty host, described in the imagery natural to a pastoral race, as now “licking up all that were round about them, as the ox licks up the grass of the field ”²—the hesitation—the tardy consent to come—the terrible apparition by the way,³ all

¹ Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations*.

² Num. xxii. 4.

³ Maimonides and Hengstenberg, among others, thought the incident happened in a dream or trance. The *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i. p. 737, thinks that Balaam, as an augur, gave a meaning, according to his art, to the natural sounds of the ass, or to some special noise made by it.

serve to excite and engage the imagination. The first meeting of Balak and the seer is equally impressive. Messengers running breathless before, announce that the great man is approaching, and forthwith the king, to do him honour, and to hurry him towards the people he wished to curse, before they advanced to the attack, sets out from his capital, Rabbah¹—"the great city"—on the uplands, about twenty miles back from the south-west corner of the Dead Sea,—and goes north to the gorge of the Arnon, on the edge of his territory. Thence they pass at once to Kirjath-huzoth²—"street-fort," or "Strasburg"—on the southern slopes of the range of Attarus, close to the camp of Israel. Next morning, seven sacrifices are offered on the neighbouring "heights of Baal," whence Balaam looks down on part at least of the Hebrew host, and thence he delivers his first words: "I cannot curse those whom God does not curse. They are a people dwelling apart from other nations, under the special care of God, and are destined to swell to countless multitudes." The amazed and disappointed king hurries him, successively, to the bare top of Pisgah and the summit of Peor "that looketh towards the waste," in hopes of more favourable oracles, but only to be each time more bitterly mocked. At each point the landscape furnishes the theme of the various utterances. The great desert, at both, reaches on the east away to the Euphrates. To the south are the red mountains of Edom; across the Dead Sea the cliffs of Engedi, the future home of the Kenites;³ the wilderness of The South

¹ Rabbah = "the capital."

² Num. xxii. 39.

³ Lieut. Conder proposes to identify their seat with the steep cliff of Yekin, which dominates the desert plateau west of the Dead Sea, and is one of the most conspicuous objects against the sky line, looking from the mountain summits on which Balaam stood. *Pal. Fund Reports*, Jan. 1881, p. 37.

spreads out in the background—the home of Amalek, the first enemy of Israel; beneath, in “the meadows of the acacias,”—the rich plains of the eastern Jordan valley, as distinguished from the cultivated “fields” of the table-land above,—lies the vast encampment of Israel; and far away to the west, beyond the hills of Palestine is, as he knows, the Great Sea, from whose bosom rise the “isles of Chittim,” and whose waters wash the shores of the lands of the future. The language of the prophet, when “he heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty,” while prostrate in a trance, but having the eyes of his mind and spirit open, are well said by Herder to show a wonderful dignity, compression, vividness and fulness of imagery?¹ He sees in thought the home of Israel in Canaan, with its sweeping valleys, marked in winter by rushing streams;² its plains spreading out, in wide verdure, like the gardens on the banks of his native Euphrates,³ adorned with the perfumed and precious aloe-tree, and the stately cedar. It has waters above and beneath—the rains and the springs. The pitcher is dipped into its flowing brooks, and the husbandman scatters his seed in sure expectation of abundant showers.

- Its enemies all conquered, it will lie down like a mighty lion, which no one dares rouse. Hereafter, but “not now,” a Star will come out of Jacob—bright as those of his eastern skies,—and a sceptre “rise out of Israel,” and “smite in pieces both sides of Moab,” and destroy its warriors. One by one, he sees the kingdoms around fall before the people of God—language realized first in the triumphs of David, but still more grandly in those of the greater Star that, like him, should rise out of

¹ *Geist d. Ebr. Poesie*, vol. ii. p. 221.

² Nachal.

³ Nahar.

Bethlehem. From Israel his vision passes to his own distant Assyria, which is destined to carry off the Kenite to captivity, from his strongholds in the rocks of Engedi. But, now, terror seizes the prophet, for the doom of all others was at last to fall on his native land—"Who shall live," cries he, "when God doeth this"—for ships shall come over the western seas, and overcome "Assur and Eber"—the races beyond the Euphrates—and they, also, shall perish for ever. A wondrous glance at the time when the arms of the West broke up the great Asiatic kingdoms for ever.¹

But though not allowed to curse Israel, he found means to injure it. The worship of Baal by the Midianites was accompanied by licentious rites frequent in the religions of antiquity, and to these the Israelites, who had been friendly with Midian in the wilderness, were invited, at Balaam's suggestion.² Repeating the sin of their fathers at Sinai, after the heathen feast of the golden calf, they abandoned themselves to the impurity that followed that of Baal.

Idolatry, thus, once more threatened to infect the chosen people, after all the efforts of Moses to free them from it by long seclusion from other races, in the wilderness. In vain were the most stern commands issued by Moses to slay every transgressor, and hang up his dead body for a warning. A plague broke out, of which 24,000 died, and brought a multitude, weeping, to the door of the Tabernacle, but the offence was not finally ended till the zeal of Phinehas, a grandson of Aaron, spread profound terror into the hearts of all. But the greatness of the crime and depth of the fall, on the part of the people, dwelt in the memory of successive generations, for even

¹ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 192. Lengerke's *Kenaan*, pp. 586 ff.

² Num. xxxi. 16.

after hundreds of years we find Hosea reminding his contemporaries how God found Israel :—

“ Like grapes in the wilderness,
Like the first-ripe figs in spring;
But they went to Baal-peor,
They consecrated themselves to that shameful idol,
And became abominations like their love.”¹

So great a catastrophe, kindling such indignation and shame amongst those zealous for Jehovah, naturally resulted in a religious war against Midian, its author. Instead of a mere soldier, Phinehas, the priest, took the command, and the Ark preceded the host, amidst the blast of the sacred trumpets. Nothing could stand before the impetuous attack. An immense slaughter of the Midianites followed; the five chiefs of its tribes, and Balaam, the great Eastern prophet, falling amidst the slain,² and the assailants securing a huge booty in cattle and slaves. But the friendship which had existed between Midian and Israel was broken off for many generations.

Bashan and Gilead, which lay as yet unappropriated, were specially adapted for a pastoral rather than an agricultural population. Hence, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half of Manasseh, who still retained

¹ Hos. ix. 10. In Ps. cvi. 28, it is said, They joined themselves unto Baal-peor and ate the sacrifices of the dead—that is, of dead idols, as contrasted with the living God. See Num. xxv. 2. *Hitzig, Ewald, Kay, Lengerke, Olshausen, Moll.*

² The women captives slain were those who had taken part either then or formerly in the rites of Baal-peor, which required all after a certain age to surrender themselves to the impurities of the worship. The aggregate number of cattle captured was 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beeves, and 61,000 asses. Thirty-two thousand maidens, also, were taken, and golden chains, bracelets, and ear-rings, to the weight, in all, of 16,750 shekels (Num. xxxi.)

their love of the old shepherd life of their ancestors,¹ set their hearts on obtaining it from Moses, and in the end did so, though only on the condition that they should join their brethren in the approaching invasion of Western Palestine. The part assigned to Reuben stretched from the deep chasm of the Arnon, north, to a line with the head of the Dead Sea; Gad secured the region from the limits of Reuben's territory to the Jabbok, across the whole breadth of the country, and also a strip along the east side of the Jordan, to the Sea of Chinnereth,² better known as the Lake of Galilee. Thence, to the foot of Lebanon was made over to Manasseh.

Seen from the western hills, this whole region forms a high table-land facing the west as a wall of purple mountain, with a singularly horizontal outline. But on a nearer approach, the flat outline breaks into hill and valley in the northern parts, and in the southern into deep ravines and gorges, through which the waters of the uplands make their way to the Jordan and the Dead Sea. The general level, however, rises high above that of the sea — Heshbon being 3,000 feet above it; Rabbah of Ammon, 2,770; Gerasa, 1,800; and Bozrah, 2,970.³ The territory of Reuben is still esteemed

¹ That these tribes alone still clung to the Arab life of their forefathers implies, as before said, that the others had adopted a settled life in Egypt. Agriculture had been the rule then with the Hebrews. See Exod. i. 14; xvi. 3. Num. xi. 5. Deut. xi. 10. Either as slaves or otherwise, the "service of the field" had become general, as it afterwards was in Palestine. The example of Isaac and Jacob had, in fact, changed the race from shepherds to farmers.

² Derived by some from Kinnoor—a harp; from its shape. Gennesareth comes from it by a change of letters frequent in the East,

³ Conder's Map.

beyond all others by the Arab sheepmasters, and bears the special name of "Mishor,"¹ as a contrast with the rough and bare rocks of the western hills. It is a wide expanse of rolling downs, covered with short smooth turf, which, in its season, springs into one vast waving ocean of grass, stretching away to the wastes of the far eastern desert. Here the king of Moab, in later times, found it easy to raise his yearly tribute to Israel of 100,000 lambs, and 100,000 rams with the wool. In such a district the Reubenites could multiply their flocks without limit. But the result was fatal to the tribe. Preferring tent life, it gradually sank into so many Arab encampments. No judge, prophet, or hero from it has come down to us, nor did it take any part in the great crises of national history. Distance, the difference of occupations, and the exposure to Arab and heathen influences, gradually estranged its sons from their western brethren. They lingered among their sheepfolds, and preferred the shepherd's life and the bleating of the flocks, to the sound of the trumpet, or the danger of battle, when appealed to for their help; contenting themselves with idly debating the matter by the side of their streams.² "Unstable as water they never excelled,"³ but ere long faded away from distinct individuality as a tribe. Disputes with desert Arabs, forays from which they drove off myriads of camels, asses and cattle, are their only annals. Preferring the tent to the

¹ Mishor = level downs; hence it is applied to a country without rock or stone. It is the special name of the upland pastures east of the Jordan. Thus "all the cities of the Mishor" (Deut. iii. 10). "The Mishor of the Reubenites" (Deut. iv. 43). "The Mishor of Medeba" (Josh. xiii. 9, 16). "All her cities that are in the Mishor" (ver. 17). See also Josh. xx. 8, where plain = Mishor, as in 1 Kings xx. 23, 25; 1 Chron. xxvi. 10; Jer. xxi. 13; xlviii. 8, 21.

² Jud. v. 15, 16.

³ Gen. xlix. 4.

town, they did not even retain the religion of their western brethren, but in the end gave themselves up "to the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them."¹

The territory of Gad embraced great part of Gilead—a region of surpassing beauty and fertility. It still abounds in magnificent woods of sycamore, beech, terebinth, ilex, and enormous fig-trees, broken by rich meadows, and park-like glades. Graceful hills, broad valleys, and luxuriant herbage are, indeed, its most striking features, for it is much like Bashan, which, as already noticed, gloried in its mighty oaks and in the vast herds of wild cattle in its forests.²

The want of marked character shown by Reuben could not be attributed to Gad, whose typical heroes, the eleven who swam the Jordan to join David at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, were fitting representatives of the tribe. "Strong men of might, men of war for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler; their faces were like the faces of lions, and like roes upon the mountains for

¹ 1 Chron v. 25.

² "The country is, in fact, surpassingly beautiful in its verdant richness and variety. Lovely knolls and dells opened at every turn; winding streamlets fringed with oleanders or sparse oaks and herbage glittered in the sun; the branches vocal with the song of birds. Rising to higher ground, we cantered through a noble forest of oaks, then we rode for a mile or two over luxuriant green corn, from which the peasant women were hoeing out thistles. Men were ploughing and preparing for cotton planting; their long firelocks piled in the centre of the field, to be rushed to on the slightest alarm. Thence we would ride for some time through a rich forest of scattered olive trees, left untrained or uncared for, but often with corn in the open glades. Then we would cross another little wady, and wind up its steep sides till we reached again a rolling plain or thin forest, or a fertile expanse of corn."—*Land of Israel*, p. 468.

swiftness.”¹ But the history of the tribes will be more fittingly noticed as our narrative proceeds.

To the half of Manasseh was assigned the northern part of the conquered territory which it had mainly won; for the Manassites at this time were certainly the most warlike of the tribes. Machir, Jair, and Nobah, its chiefs, were not shepherds, like the Reubenites, but valiant warriors, whose deeds are frequently recorded.² It was Jair who took all the tract of Argob, with its sixty great cities; and Nobah who took Kenath and its dependencies; and we are told that because Machir was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan.³ These districts, as we have seen, were the most difficult in the whole country, for they embraced the hills of Gilead, and the almost impregnable tract known as the Lejah, or “refuge,” from the security which its natural fortifications afforded. But Manasseh also, like Reuben and Gad, affected by its position and its isolation, gradually fell into the wandering shepherd life, and ceased to be a power in Israel. Nor did it even remain true to its ancient faith, but, like the other tribes of the east of Jordan, gave itself up to the local idolatry.⁴

A new census of the people which was now taken showed an aggregate, in all the tribes, of 601,730 men. This, with the revision of his laws, was apparently the last public act in the life of Moses. He was now at the close of his magnificent career, for it was not fitting that his glory as the great prophet, should be confused with that of a conqueror, by his leading the people over the Jordan. But, before he left them, his loving spirit broke out once more, as the father of Israel, in farewell addresses which breathe the highest spirit of poetry. In

¹ 1 Chron. xii. 8.

² Num. xxxii. 39. Deut. iii. 13-15.

³ Josh. xvii. 1.

⁴ 1 Chron. v. 25.

one he utters a strain intended to animate them to the contest on which they were entering; in a second he gives his blessing to the separate tribes; and in the third he leaves them the legacy of the song known specially by his name. In this last, it is noticeable, that he nine times speaks of God as *The Rock*—a name which only Sinai and the desert could have suggested: and the pastoral riches he promises are such as only the eastern side of the Jordan afforded—"The butter of kine, the milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat kidneys of wheat"¹—incidental proofs of the authenticity of the composition. Another lyric is attributed to him, and, if his, seems in its fitting place as a dying gift to mankind. The ninetieth Psalm, known as the Prayer of Moses the Man of God, contrasting the shortness of human life with the eternity of Him who existed from everlasting, "before ever the mountains were brought forth," points, perhaps, to inspiration caught under the shadow of Sinai, but may well have been written with its image rising before his memory at the end of his earthly course.

But his time had come. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," yet he had finished his work. A new era was opening, for which another was the fit leader. He was now, himself, to enter on his reward. But before departing to his rest, a glimpse was to be granted him of the goodly land into which his people were about to pass. Climbing "from the plains of Moab," the sunken level of the Ghor, on the edge of the Jordan, "to the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho, the Lord showed him" the future inheritance of his race. Tristram tells

¹ Deut. xxxii. 13, 14.

us, that on the lofty hills overlooking the mouth of the Jordan, every condition required for the Pisgah both of Balaam and Moses is met. The height cannot be less than 4,500 feet, so that the crowning summit completely overlooks Hebron and the mountains of Central Judea. To the eastward, the ridge slopes gently for two or three miles, and then, sweeping forth, rolls in one boundless plain, stretching far into Arabia, till lost in the horizon; one waving ocean of corn and grass. "As the eye turns southward the peak of Jebel Shiha first stands out behind Jebel Attarus. Beyond and behind these, sharply rise Mounts Hor and Seir, and the red granite peaks of Arabia. Still turning westward, the landscape sinks in two or three lines of gigantic terraces as it descends to the Dead Sea, which lies beneath, like a strip of molten metal. Far beyond it the ridge of Hebron can be traced. Northward lies the deep bed of the river Jordan, with the site of Israel's last camp. Beyond the river rises the top of Gerizim, and, farther still, the plain of Esdraelon opens, and the shoulder of Carmel, or some other intervening height, shows to the right of Gerizim. Northwards again the eye catches the outline of Tabor and Gilboa. Snowy Hermon, mantled with cloud, and the highest range of Lebanon behind it, looks down over all; and to the north-east the vast Hauran stretches out till it joins the uplands of Moab and Ammon."¹

A sight of this magnificent panorama having been vouchsafed the great leader, the hour came when he should depart. Somewhere in the Abarim range, on a summit dedicated to the god Nebo, he took his last look of the land he was not to enter; seeing much, but knowing that, even beyond the magnificent sweep of that wide landscape, there lay still more that must be hidden for

¹ Tristram's *Land of Israel*, pp. 542-3 (condensed).

ever from his eyes. From that height he came down no more; but when he died or where he was buried was known to none, lest his tomb might become a centre of idolatrous pilgrimage. As in life, so in death, self was nothing, his duty all. Josephus, though writing from imagination, could not be in material error when he says, that "he withdrew among the tears of the people; the women beating their breasts, and the children giving way to uncontrollable wailing. At a certain point in his ascent he made a sign to the weeping multitude to advance no farther, taking with him only the elders, the high priest Eleazar, and the general, Joshua. At the top of the mountain he dismissed the elders, and then, as he was embracing Eleazar and Joshua, and still speaking to them, a cloud suddenly stood over him and he vanished in a deep valley."¹

It was a fitting tribute to such a man that Israel publicly lamented his loss for thirty days. They naturally felt themselves like orphans. He had not only raised them from a horde of slaves to a nation, but had given them a creed and institutions which would for ever secure for them a distinct national existence. As the prophet of God he had made them the depositaries of truths unknown to the world besides; the possession of which would make them the benefactors of all ages. His laws and morals were destined to mould them to an ideal only to be surpassed by the revelations of Christianity. His sympathy with his charge had been sublime. He could say of himself, that he had borne them as a nurse bears a child. His patience and hopefulness with them had been wonderful. His gentleness, and self-oblivion, had given him supreme authority and reverence. He could boast before them that he had taken nothing from

¹ Jos., *Ant.*, IV. viii. 48.

any one, and that he had injured none. His utter freedom from all littleness of soul had been shown by his wishing that all Israelites were prophets like himself. In all respects, indeed, he had been a man apart from his fellows, and immeasurably above them, and the remembrance that such an one had stood at the cradle of their infant nation gave all its following generations ■ grand impulse to a noble life.¹

The legends of the death of Moses are too lengthy to be given in full, but the conclusion of one of them may be quoted. "And when he had gone up the mountain," says one portion, "he met three men who were digging ■ grave, and he asked them, 'For whom do you dig this grave?' They answered 'For a man whom God will call to be with Him in Paradise.' Moses asked leave to help in digging the grave of such a holy man. When it was completed, he asked, 'Have you taken the measure of the deceased?' 'No. But he was of thy size, lie down in it.' Moses did so. The three men were the angels Michael, Gabriel, and Sagsagel. The angel Michael had begun the grave, the angel Gabriel had spread the white napkin for the head, the angel Sagsagel that for the feet. Then the angel Michael stood on one side of Moses, the angel Gabriel on the other side, and the angel Sagsagel at the feet, and the majesty of God appeared above his head.

"And the Lord said to Moses, 'Close thine eyelids,' and he obeyed. Then the Lord said, 'Press thy hand upon thy heart,' and he did so. Then God said, 'Place thy feet in order,' and he did so. Then the Lord God addressed the spirit of Moses, and said, 'Holy soul, my daughter, for 120 years hast thou inhabited this un-

¹ See *Graetz*, vol. i. pp. 57, 58, for an estimate of the character of Moses.

defiled body of dust. But now thine hour is come, go forth and mount to Paradise.' But the soul answered, trembling and with pain, 'In this pure and undefiled body have I spent so many years that I love it, and I have not the courage to desert it.' 'My daughter,' replied God, 'come forth! I will place thee in the highest heaven, beneath the cherubim and seraphim who bear up My eternal throne.' Yet the soul doubted and quaked. Then God bent over the face of Moses and kissed him. And the soul leaped up in joy, and went with the kiss of God to Paradise. Then a sad cloud draped the heavens, and the winds wailed, 'Who lives now on earth to fight against sin and error?' And a voice answered, 'Such a prophet never arose before.' And the Earth lamented, 'I have lost the holy one.' And Israel lamented, 'We have lost the Shepherd.' And the angels sang, 'He is come in peace to the arms of God.' " ¹

¹ Weil's *Legends*, p. 142. Baring Gould's *Old Testament Legends*, vol. ii. p. 133. Orientals have a genius for legends of the death of saints. What could be finer than the following Mussulman legend of the death of Abraham? "The Angel of Death when bidden to take the soul of the prophet, hesitated about doing so without his consent. So he took upon him the form of a very old man, and came to Abraham's door. The patriarch invited him in, and gave him to eat, but he noted with surprise the great infirmity of the old man, how his limbs tottered, how dull was his sight, and how incapable he was of feeding himself, for his hands shook, and how little he could eat, for his teeth were gone. And he asked him how old he was. Then the angel answered 'I am 202.' Now Abraham was then 200 years old. So he said 'What! in two years shall I be as feeble and helpless as this? O Lord, suffer me to depart: now send the Angel of Death to me, to remove my soul.' Then the angel took him; having first watched till he was on his knees in prayer." *

* Weil, p. 98.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

THE state of Palestine in the days of Thothmes III. has been described from the Egyptian records, in earlier pages, and fortunately some aids may be obtained from the same sources for learning its state and that of the districts north and south of it, when Israel was about to invade it. A letter of an Egyptian¹ officer, dating from the reign of Rameses II., "the Oppressor," has reached our times, and contains some curious information. Fords are more common than bridges; cypresses, oaks and cedars, "reaching to heaven," abound; there are many lions, wolves, and hyenas, which are hunted by the Shasous or Arabs. The roughness of the tracks towards Palestine almost shakes the traveller to pieces. A thief enters the stable at night and steals his clothes, and his servant, instead of aiding his master, takes the opportunity of running off into the desert, with what he could besides, and joins a wandering tribe. Some of "the enemy" add to the trouble by plundering the baggage left. When he reaches Tyre he finds that water is carried to it in boats. He has to take care, in one

¹ *Travels of an Egyptian*, translated by M. C. W. Goodwin. *Cambridge Essays*, 1858. *Voyage d'un Egyptien en Syrie en Phenicie*, etc., by M. F. Chabas, 1866.

place, apparently in Lebanon, of a ravine 3,000 feet deep, with a very difficult track, and is in danger from huge hyenas. At another part the way is full of rocks and rolling stones, without a practicable passage, and is, besides, obstructed by hollies, Indian figs, aloes, and bushes. On one side is a precipice rising sheer above him, against which the horses dash the chariot, breaking the pole and making progress impossible, except on foot. The gardens at Joppa, however, restore his spirits; but here, once more, a robber steals his bow, dagger, and quiver. On his renewed journey his reins are cut in the night and the horses run away. When they are recovered, the chariot is broken to pieces on a rough hill-track, and workmen in wood, metal, and leather, have to be procured to repair it. The route followed seems to have been along the Maritime Plain to Tyre; thence over Lebanon, and thence to the Jordan, and finally across the central hills to Joppa.¹ The object of the journey seems to have been to collect the tribute due to Egypt, and this implies, that although Canaan may have revolted from the Pharaohs after the disastrous reign of Menephtah II., the districts conquered by Thothmes III., including the plains of Esdraelon and Philistia and a part of the Negeb, were till then attached to the Egyptian monarchy. If so, no fewer than one hundred and nineteen towns named by Thothmes were subject to the southern power.

Reference has been made at an earlier page to the booty taken by Thothmes III., from Palestine and the adjacent countries, but the records of Rameses II. show their condition in the age of Moses itself. The Egyptian

¹ This is the route supposed by some to be intimated. Lieut. Conder, however, thinks the traveller started from near Aleppo, crossed Lebanon, to the Lake of Galilee, and returned thence by Joppa to Egypt. *Pal. Fund Reports*, 1876, pp. 74 ff.

king brought back from them, he tells us, gold, glass, gums, cattle, male and female slaves, ivory, ebony, boats laden with all good things, horses, chariots inlaid with gold and silver, or painted, goblets, dishes, iron, steel, dates, oil, wine, asses, cedar, suits of armour, fragrant wood, war galleys, incense, gold dishes with handles, collars and ornaments of lapis lazuli, silver dishes, vases of silver, precious stones, honey, goats, lead, spears of brass, colours, beer, bread, geese, fruit, milk, pigeons: the plunder, in fact, of a rich and civilized country. The meadows of Palestine, its fortresses, its groves, and its orchards are mentioned, showing that prosperity of every kind abounded.¹ It was no savage or unoccupied region therefore that was to be conquered by Joshua, but a land strongly defended, full of people, and provided with all appliances for resistance. Nor was it without marked culture, for its libraries gave a name to some of its cities.

Nothing, however, could withstand the fiery enthusiasm of the Hebrews, who came, like the valiant Franks in the fifth century, as the last great wave of national migration, to seek new homes.² It was well that they had failed forty years before, when still imperfectly grounded in their religious principles, for they would then assuredly have adopted the idolatry of the Canaanites. Forty years' seclusion in the wilderness, with its terrible discipline, crowned by the calamity and shame of Baal-peor, had made them, at least for the time, fierce zealots, to whom the idols of Palestine were abominations as hateful as the hideous gods of Mexico, with their human sacrifices, in the eyes of the invading Spaniards; an aversion which,

¹ Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Abth. iii. Bl. 30a, 30b, 31a. In Josh. xix. 5 Hazar-susah = "Horse-village" occurs, and Beth-marcaboth = "House of Chariots."

² Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 336.

in spite of temporary apostasies on their part, in the end wrought the overthrow of the whole system so utterly, that we are indebted for the names of some of the Canaanite deities rather to their revival by Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," than to the pages of Scripture.

Yet the difficulties of the Hebrews were immense. To the iron chariots,¹ the horses, and the fortresses of the country,² and its formidable leagues of chiefs and kings, they could oppose only a rude, half-armed militia, with inadequate military training. They had to overcome those who fought for their homes and their country, and were familiar with every part of it. But an enthusiasm, like that which made the ragged and worn levies of France irresistible in the first campaigns of the Great Revolution, filled every bosom; sustained in this case, moreover, by a profound belief among the invading force, that God was at their head. Though only on foot, they felt such confidence, under this lofty inspiration, that they despised the strong fortresses they would have to attack, and captured the chariots and horses only to show their contempt of such aids by burning the one and cutting the sinews of the other.³ Asses, not horses, were the glory of Israel; their chiefs habitually using them, and even their kings till the time of Solomon having only mules, at the best.

The supreme authority over the nation and the army

¹ It has been thought that the "iron chariots" meant chariots provided with sharp sickles at the hubs of the wheels. But these were not used in Asia before the time of Cyrus, and were wholly unknown in Egypt, where the common chariots were of wood clamped with iron. Chariots with sickles at the wheels are first mentioned in 2 Macc. xiii. 2. See Schenkel's *Lex.*, vol. v. p. 287.

² Keil's *Archäologie*, p. 749.

³ Deut. xvii. 16. Josh. x. 20; xi. 6, 9; xvii. 15-18. Jud. v. 8, 22. 1 Sam. xv. 4. 2 Sam. viii. 4.

had been entrusted by Moses, before his death, to Joshua, his faithful "minister" since the days of the Mount of God. Born about the time when his great master fled to Midian, the future hero, brought up as a slave, like his brethren, was in the prime of life at the Exodus, and had already so commended himself to the keen eye of Moses on the march to Sinai, that the repelling of the attack made by Amalek at Rephidim had been entrusted to him. A scion of the great tribe of Ephraim, his birth commanded the loyalty of all its members, and of the nation at large; for Ephraim, as the representative of Joseph, was as yet its recognized head. But his own qualities were in themselves fitted to attract confidence. With no claim to be a prophet, but rather disliking those who may have seemed to him, as a soldier, talkers rather than actors,¹ he bore himself only as a warrior, with a given task to accomplish, and resolute to carry it out. To Moses, God had appeared in the burning bush: to Joshua, the final commission and Divine encouragement was given by the vision of a "man"—"the Captain of the host of Jehovah,"—"with His sword drawn in His hand." Nor is it without significance as an index to his character, that he forthwith advances to meet the apparition, doubtless, spear in hand; but presently, on learning its nature, takes off his war-shoes, as standing on holy ground, and worships, prostrate on the earth.² But the choice of the plain unpretending soldier proved its wisdom by its result. Had Phinehas, the warlike and fiercely zealous son of Aaron, been selected, a priestly stamp would inevitably have marked the future of Israel; if, indeed, a priest-royalty had not been founded in his line. Or, had a son of Moses been appointed successor to his father, there is no security that he would have been

¹ Num. xi. 23.

² Josh. v. 13-15.

equal to the office, and the foundation of hereditary monarchy in his family could scarcely have been avoided.

The river Jordan, which now rolled its swollen current between Israel and Western Palestine, is primarily due to the junction of three mountain streams, the Hasbany, the Leddan, and the Baniyas, which collect the waters of numerous fountains and springs of Lebanon, and begin their course, the first at the height of 1,700 feet, the second at 647 feet, and the third 1,140 feet, above the sea.¹ Uniting at the lower end of the plain El Huleh, they turn great part of it into a morass, veiled by an almost impenetrable jungle of tall reeds; the haunt of innumerable waterfowl and other birds, and of the wild boar and many other beasts. The deeper central part, however, forms a lake, the "Merom" of the Bible, over four miles long and nearly three broad, and 373 feet above the sea. For two miles after leaving this, the river flows sluggishly till it enters a narrow gorge, with high and somewhat precipitous hills on each side. Down this it rushes for the next nine miles as a foaming torrent, descending nearly 900 feet to the level of the Sea of Galilee, which lies 682 feet² below the Mediterranean. The Sea of Galilee is shaped like a pear, the broad end to the north; its greatest width 8 miles, its extreme length $12\frac{1}{4}$; its borders a succession of hills from 1,000 to 1,500 feet high, occasionally receding from the shore and forming small plains, of which one is the famous Plain of Genesareth. Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, a distance of 66 miles, the channel is a chasm called the Ghor, from 1 to 12 miles broad; in some parts fertile in the extreme, in others utterly barren; the mountains of Palestine bounding it on the west; the great eastern plateau on the other side. Within this

¹ Kitto's *Cyc.*, art. *Jordan*

² *Tent Work*, p. 290.

strange bed the river descends with innumerable windings, through a lower valley it has worn to a depth of from 40 to 100 feet below the level of the Ghor; its sides deeply fringed with a tropical jungle—known in Scripture as the “pride” or “swelling of the Jordan,”¹ and in former days as the special haunt of lions. So tortuous is its course, that in the 66 miles between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea in a direct line, it darts at so many angles over its rough bed as to make its whole length nearly 200 miles; and in this distance it leaps and rushes over twenty-seven rapids, including in all, a descent of 606 feet.² It need hardly be said that such a river is not navigable in any part, and that the lake in which it disappears never had a port.³

It was now the month Abib, part of our April and May, when the barley and flax harvests were ripe. The melting of the snows in Hermon, as usual at this season, had raised the stream till its yellow waters had overflowed the lower banks, which stretch, back and upwards, to a second border fringed with a thick jungle of reed and cane, running at a varying depth beneath the outside cliffs which form the first approach to the river. How high the waters had risen is not stated, but when Canon Tristram last visited these parts they had been fourteen feet above their usual level at the last spring floods.⁴

¹ Jer. xlix. 19; 1. 44. Zech. xi. 3.

² *Palestine Fund Reports*. Conder's *Handbook*, p. 215.

³ The Jordan shows in its channel four broad regions, connected by two narrow ones, with a marshy lake and valley, highest of all; suggestive of a former chain of great lakes connected by a river, but now gradually drained off till three small sheets of water alone remain, with the broad dry beds of two others. There have been, in fact, four successive Dead Seas, the highest level of which was 600 or 700 feet above that of the present Dead Sea. *Tent Work*, pp. 217, 218.

⁴ *Land of Israel*, p. 223.

That such a time should have been chosen for crossing might well impress on Israel the supernatural aid it enjoyed, and could not fail, proportionally, to discourage the enemy.

Two young men ¹ having been selected to act as spies, and sent over the river, the last preparations were made for crossing, and thus, undesignedly, for deciding the future history of the chosen people as that of a settled, agricultural community, rather than wandering shepherd tribes. On the fifth day, apparently, the spies returned, having bravely swum across the river,—like the eleven mighty men from the uplands of Gad, when they cast in their lot with David,²—and brought a report which emboldened both Joshua and the people in their enterprize more than ever. They had been in great danger, but had been saved by the fidelity of Rahab, a woman of Jericho, to whose house they had gone; repaying her by the promise of protection to herself and her family when the city should be taken—a pledge which Joshua and the tribes faithfully kept. Indeed, she was afterwards married to a Hebrew, and so completely adopted into the nation, that she became one of the ancestors of David, and through him, of our Lord. Nor were her family and connections forgotten; they too lived permanently in Israel on a footing of friendship and equality.³

¹ *Septuagint*.

² 1 Chron. xii. 15. See p. 375.

³ It has been sought to explain Rahab's position as that of a hostess. But there are neither hosts nor hostesses in Eastern khans; nor would it have been possible for men to have lodged at the house of any respectable Eastern woman. Rahab's being asked to bring out the spies to the soldiers sent for them, is in strict keeping with Eastern manners, which would not permit any man to enter a woman's house without her permission. The fact of her covering the spies with the bundles of flax which lay on her house-roof to dry is an "undesigned coincidence," which

An order was now issued that the people should "sanctify" themselves by a strict legal purification,¹ and preparation of heart, in anticipation of the wonders to be wrought by God on their behalf. Next day the crossing took place. The cloudy pillar had disappeared, apparently, with the death of Moses; but in its absence, as a symbol of the presence of God with the host, the sacred Ark was borne before the host, on the shoulders of priests. Behind them, at a reverent distance of more than half a mile, came forty thousand men from the Transjordanic tribes, forming the van, contrary to the rule as to their position;² then, according to tradition, the women and children, in the centre: the rest of the armed men following in their rear. But now was seen an amazing miracle. As soon as the feet of the priests had been wetted in the utmost edge of the Jordan, though not till then, the waters parted before them, and they passed on—their bare feet sinking in the soft bottom as they advanced³—to the middle of the channel, and there stood till the whole host had passed over. The stream, meanwhile, checked in its course, "rose up," we are told, "upon an heap, very far off, by Adam, the city

strikingly corroborates the narrative.* It was the time of the barley harvest, and flax and barley are ripe at the same time in the Jordan Valley, so that the bundles of flax stalks might have been expected to be drying just then. That Rahab had them implies, further, that the women of the country made their own linen, from the very first process. Flax grows in the Jordan Valley to more than three feet in height and has a stalk as thick as a cane.

¹ Exod. xix. 10. Lev. xi. 44.

² Num. xxxii. 20. Josh. iv. 12.

³ Josh. iv. 18.

* Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*, p. 105.

that is near Zaretan,"¹ near the mouth of the Jabbok; that is, at a distance of about thirty miles north. The people could, therefore, cross along a great breadth of front, which would immensely facilitate the passage.

An event so wonderful could not be allowed to pass without a memorial, and a double one was appointed, worthy of it in expressive simplicity. Twelve of the large stones laid bare in the bed of the river were ordered to be carried over to the western side and raised on the upper terrace of the valley, in the centre of the new camping ground, while a second twelve were placed on the spot in the channel where the feet of the priests had stood during the crossing. But such is the tendency to associate superstition with even the simplest religious memorials, among a rude people, that the circle of Gilgal seems ultimately to have become the seat of idolatry.²

The site thus chosen, has been fortunately identified, after more than 3,000 years, by the intelligent labours of the members of the Palestine Survey. The name Jiljulieh, which is the same word as Gilgal, still clings to a mound about three miles south-east from the spot where, apparently, the city of Jericho must have stood; near the beautiful fountain known as the Sultan's Spring, and close to the steep background of the limestone hills of Judah. The host of the Hebrews, at the camp thus chosen for them, were about 500 feet above the bed of the Jordan, and had the stream from the Wady el Kelt close on the south. The river they had crossed lay underneath them about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the east. An open

¹ *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 298, n. Zaretan must have been near Succoth, at the ford of the Jordan, near the mouth of the Jabbok. 1 Kings vii. 46.

² Hosea iv. 13; ix. 15; xii. 11. Amos iv. 4; v. 5.

plain stretched on all sides and permitted free movement; the wall of the hills of Judah rising 1,000 feet above the level of the camp, at the distance of about 3 miles to the west.¹ The name Gilgal was given in direct allusion, we are told, to the rolling away of the last trace of the degradation and "reproach" of their Egyptian slavery, by the circumcision of the host, which had been neglected in the wilderness, but was now commanded by Joshua, as the appointed acknowledgment of their national covenant with God at Sinai.² It was meet, on the threshold of so great an enterprise, which was, in fact, a claim from Jehovah to fulfil the promise given by Him to their fathers, of bringing them into Canaan as its conquerors, that they should, on their side, fulfil the condition He had imposed as the badge of their consecration to Him as a people.³ It was prudent, also, that a feeling of strong separation from the race they were about to attack, and of their superiority to them, as the chosen people of God, should be thus duly impressed on them. But another allusion may well have been to the circle⁴ of twelve stones, raised by Joshua's orders; the first sanctuary of Israel in Palestine. Many similar rings still exist in Moab and elsewhere, and indeed such

¹ Conder's *Tent Work*, pp. 201 f. *Palestine Fund Large Map of Palestine*, sheet 18.

² Gen. xvii. 10-14.

³ Circumcision was the condition of God's giving them the land (Gen. xvii. 7). It had fallen into abeyance during the wilderness life. Even the Passover had not been kept after leaving* Sinai, because, as Jewish commentators explain, it was not to be held again till the people had entered Canaan.†

⁴ Gilgal=a circle. In Neh. xii. 27-29, we read more fully of "the Gilgal"="the circle." In Isa. xxxiii. 28, it is translated "wheel."

* Num. ix. 5.

† Ex. xii. 25; xiii. 5-10.

cromlechs and dolmens were associated with the earliest forms of religion in almost every country.

Gilgal formed a basis for future operations, and remained the head quarters of the army and of the tribes for some years; the Tabernacle being set up in it as the national sanctuary, till it was at a later time removed to Shiloh. Meanwhile, two additional associations connected themselves with the spot: in the celebration of the first Passover kept in Canaan—the first also since their leaving Sinai; and by the cessation, on the day after, of the fall of manna, and its replacement by the “old corn of the land,” found, doubtless, in the houses and barns of the inhabitants.¹

The taking of Jericho was evidently the first task before Israel, for it stood at the entrance of the main passes up to the interior, and was thus the key of the land. Till it had fallen they could not advance, for their rear would be left exposed; but when it was once taken, they would be free to move forward. The copiousness of its water supply, and the consequent fertility of the soil, heightened by the almost tropical heat of a neighbourhood 600 or 700 feet below the level of the sea, might well have been another inducement to the Hebrews to make it their own; but they were in no mood to spare either the city or its inhabitants, and looked upon the whole place as accursed.

It was, indeed, a delightful spot. The torrent of the Wady Kelt, issuing from between the tremendous precipices between which it finds its way from the table-land above, flowed across the plain to the Jordan, amidst luxuriant verdure, faintly represented even now by a green line of tangled thickets. A little to the north, two copious springs welled out in permanent brooks from the

¹ Josh. v. 10-12.

foot of the hills, which form, north and south, the background of the plain—the hills in whose caverns the spies had hidden. The landscape created by such streamlets, in so warm a climate, and, then, covered with rich cultivation, can still be imagined from the glades of tangled shrub now marking their course—glades which, but for their rank luxuriance and oriental vegetation, almost recall the scenery of an English park.¹

Such a scene must have had unspeakable charms to the Hebrews, in its contrast to the long privations of the wilderness. From their camp at Gilgal, the eye wandered over a vast grove of majestic palms, nearly three miles in breadth and eight miles long, interspersed now, in the late spring, with ripening corn fields. The grey mountains rising behind, only heightened the charms of the landscape by their dreary bareness. At their base, and thus commanding the whole view, embowered in verdure, were the temples and palaces of Jericho, a city famous for its wealth and luxury no less than for its position, but the object of the bitter hatred of Israel, as a centre of that idol worship which had left amongst them the burning memories of Baal-peor. It was, indeed, the local seat of the worship of Ashtoreth, the consort of Baal—its very name meaning the City of the Moon,² which was the symbol of that goddess. Hence it represented all that was foulest and most revolting in the heathenism of the Canaanites, which Israel had been taught to regard as an abomination to Jehovah, and as such to be rooted out by the sword of Divine justice, now entrusted to their hands. The only thought they could entertain towards it, therefore, was one of loathing abhorrence, fittingly

¹ *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 300.

² Hitzig, *Geschichte*, p. 98.

expressed in the command they presently received from Joshua, to devote it to destruction, sparing from the universal ruin and effacement only objects of metal, which could be cleansed from defilement in the purifying furnace.

The lesson taught by the capture of this stronghold was in keeping with that of the passage of the Jordan. Human agency was, in both cases, superseded by the direct and manifest power of God, and Israel made to feel His presence and His resistless might. In crossing the swollen river, they had simply looked on while nature was controlled on their behalf. In the taking of Jericho, they had only to obey commands which had no natural relation to such an enterprise. Safe, as it fancied, within its high and strong walls, and, doubtless, well-provisioned, the city appeared as if it could defy the assault of a force, however numerous, which had no materials for a siege; nor would it fear blockade, in the near prospect of relief which it was justified in entertaining. The crowded population must indeed, at first, have been terror-struck at the approach of the conquerors of Gilead and Bashan, else they would have opposed the crossing of the river; but when, instead of an attack, they saw only, day by day, strange circuits of the town by the forces of the enemy, guarding their priests as they bore the Ark on their shoulders, amidst the sound of trumpets¹

¹ It is not certain whether the trumpets were of ram's horns or only of that shape. The phrase is, literally, "trumpets of soundings" or "of jubilee." It is singular to notice the constant recurrence of the number seven. Seven priests go before the Ark, with seven trumpets, for seven days, going seven times round the city on the seventh day. The Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles each lasted seven days. The consecration of priests also took seven days. Seven victims were required on special occasions. To ratify an oath, was "to seven it." The number

—their panic may well have turned to confidence. That the walls should give way and open a wide breach after the seven circuits of the seventh day must have raised only one thought in the bosom of all Israel—that the victory was not theirs but God's. It is not even hinted that one of the earthquakes, so common in that region, happened at the time, though such a coincidence has been imagined.

The terrible sternness with which Joshua destroyed the whole population of the city, and even the cattle found in it, has seemed to many in strange contradiction to the mercy inculcated elsewhere in the Bible, and even to the instincts of nature. Yet Israel was expressly commanded to "smite and utterly destroy the Canaanite race, showing no mercy,"¹ and "to save alive nothing that breathed,"² and it would seem that, at least in some cases, Joshua literally carried out this universal proscription. Not only at Jericho, but, we are told, throughout all the hill country, the Negeb, the lowlands, and the slopes, "he left none remaining, but destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded."³ Yet

seems to have been regarded as the symbol of completeness or perfection, and to have been, as such, connected intimately with everything relating to God. It was sacred also among the Persians (Esth. i. 10, 14), among the ancient Indians, and, to some extent, among the Greeks and Romans.

¹ Deut. vii. 2.

² Deut. xx. 16.

³ Josh. x. 40. It was not uncommon among ancient nations to "devote" persons or things to utter destruction. Thus Cæsar tells us that among the Gauls, "when they have resolved to fight, they often *devote* those things they may take in the war, to Mars, and when they have conquered, they burn the animals taken." *Bell. Gall.*, vi. 17. Tacitus tells us of the Hermunduri, that they were successful in a war with the Catti, "because the victors *devoted* the opposing army to Mars and Mercury, by which vow horses, men, and all things taken are given up to

it is doubtful if this is to be accepted in the widest sense, for we find the regions thus named as entirely depopulated, filled, for ages after, with Canaanite towns and cities, so strong as not only to shake off the Hebrew yoke, and drive Israel permanently to the hills, but even, in some cases, to attack them there and reduce them from time to time to dependence. Still, the fact remains that the extermination of whole peoples was divinely commanded, and that the neglect to carry it out to the uttermost is named as a criminal disobedience to Jehovah, for which Israel had to pay a terrible penalty.¹

But if, on the one hand, the character of the religion of the Canaanites be remembered, and, on the other, the Divine purpose to develop among the Israelites a pure and lofty Theocracy, through which, hereafter, the highest manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth was to be made known among men, the apparent difficulty in accepting the policy commanded to Joshua, disappears. The heathenism of Palestine and Syria was so foul and degrading in every sense, that there is no State, even at this time, which would not put it down; if necessary, by the severest penalties. Its spread to Rome was bewailed 1,500 years later by the satirists of the day as a calamity marking the utter decay of the times.¹ It was imperative, therefore, that the land in which the Chosen People were to be educated in the true religion, so as to become the disseminators of its doctrines through the world, should be cleared of whatever would so certainly neutralize the gracious plans of the Almighty. Nor is it

destruction." *Ann.*, xiii. 57. Livy also mentions a Roman law, which runs, "whoever injured a tribune of the people, an ædile, judge, or decemvir, his head shall be devoted to Jupiter, and his family sold into slavery:" iii. 55.

¹ Jud. ii. 2.

² Juvenal. *Sat.*, iii. 62.

wonderful that no other means of securing this great end presented itself to the Hebrew legislator or reformer, in the presence of such hideous immorality and corruption, than the rooting it out with the edge of the sword.²

The results that actually followed the imperfect obedience to the Divine command show at once the necessity and the true mercy which it embodied, in spite of its sternness. Eager to enjoy the new land to which they had come, the Israelites soon lost their first enthusiasm, and sought ignoble ease, by friendly alliances and intermarriage with their heathen neighbours. But the frequent and profound lapses into idolatry through this course, proved how real was the danger, to protect them from which the proscription of the Canaanites had been dictated.

Nor must it be forgotten that the nations of Palestine had had repeated warnings and a long time for reformation. Forty years had passed since the news of the passage of the Red Sea, and of the wonders in Egypt, had proclaimed the greatness of Jehovah above all gods. The recent conquest of the kings of Gilead and Bashan had no less vividly shown that a mighty invincible Power fought on the side of Israel, and rightfully claimed universal homage. The certain punishment of impurity by this Almighty Being had been seen, moreover, in the fatal plague with which He had smitten even His own people for mingling in the abominations of Baal-peor. Rahab, in Jericho, had heard of these judgments, and, doubtless, the conviction of the people at large through the land, however they may have stifled reflection, was the same as hers, that "Jehovah, the God of Israel, was God in heaven above and in earth beneath."²

The customs of these remote times must not, besides,

¹ Schlottman, in *Richm.*, p. 129.

² Josh. ii. 11.

be forgotten; for a mode of executing Divine judgments that might seem terrible in our age, was only the natural course of things in antiquity. To kill all the men, or even all the population of a conquered town, was the common practice in war. "I fought against the city" (Ataroth, of the tribe of Gad), says King Mesha, on the Moabite stone, "and took it, and slaughtered all the men, to please Chemosh, the god of Moab," "and I put in it, in their stead, the men of Schiran and of Schacharath, to inhabit it." "I took the town Nebo (from Israel), and put to the sword all its inhabitants, seven chiefs of the tribes . . . the women and the children, for Chemosh had uttered a curse against it."¹ Joshua's course, therefore, though in his case the execution of a righteous judgment for terrible iniquity, and an all-wise preparation for a grand scheme of favour to mankind at large, was only that of the Canaanites themselves in their own wars, which would have been carried out on Israel had they been conquerors.

The humanity of our day, we must, moreover, remember, has been attained only by the development of right feelings through thousands of years, and implies a public sentiment which the world in Joshua's day, and for ages after, was wholly unable to comprehend or accept.

If, further, contrasted with usages of war in at least some cases in these fierce times, the sternness of Joshua seems wonderful in its dignified restraint. Compare his action with that of the Assyrian king, Assur-Nasir-Pal, sometimes called Sardanapalus.

"They brought me word," (says that monarch)

"That the city of Suri had revolted. . . .

Chariots and army I collected. From the rebellious nobles

¹ *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1871, p. 594.

I stripped off their skin and made them into a trophy.
 Some I left in the middle of the pile to decay.
 Some I impaled on the top of the hill, on stakes.
 Some I placed by the side of the pile, in order, on stakes.
 I flayed many within view of my land, and
 Arranged their skins on the walls.
 I brought Ahiyababa to Nineveh. I flayed him and
 Fastened his skin to the wall. . . ."

"I drew near to Tila.

I besieged the city with onset and attack.
 Many soldiers I captured alive.
 Of some I chopped off the hands and feet; of others I cut off
 The noses and ears, and I destroyed the eyes of many.
 One pile of bodies I reared up while they were yet alive,
 And I raised another of heads on the heights within their town.
 Their boys and their maidens I dishonoured."¹

The strange incident, presently to be noticed, of the march of Israel to Shechem, helps us to realize the spirit in which Joshua and the nation had hitherto carried out their mission of conquest and retribution. Fresh from the scenes of Jericho and Ai, they gathered between Ebal and Gerizim, to listen to the words of the Law, which proclaimed a blessing upon purity, justice, order, and truthfulness between man and man; demanded absolute obedience to a holy God; and denounced curses on impurity, injustice, sensuality, and wrong doing.² Mere bloodthirstiness or savage ferocity cannot be rightly attributed to a people capable of such a transaction, however different their ideas in some respects may have been from ours. In Jericho, as already said, they saw only the pollution which had brought on them terrible punishment after Baal-peor, and their fierceness was

¹ *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. pp. 39-50. *Cuneiform Inscript. of Western Asia*, vol. i. pp. 17-27.

² Josh. viii. 33, 34.

that of a people eager to act as the ministers of Jehovah, at once in preventing a repetition of a temptation so great, and in striking terror into the country at large, as a preparation for its conquest. It was certain, also, that the camp at Gilgal could not be safe with such a stronghold of the enemy at hand. For their own sakes, moreover, the hatefulness of idolatry in the sight of God, as shown in His demanding the utter destruction not only of the transgressors, but even of all they had, and of the very city itself,¹ needed to be burned in on their souls.

"The Israelites' sword," says Dr. Arnold, "in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth, to the very end of the world. They seem of very small importance to us now, those perpetual contests with the Canaanites, and the Midianites, and the Ammonites, and the Philistines, with which the Books of Joshua, and Judges, and Samuel, are almost filled. We may half wonder that God should have interposed in such quarrels, or have changed the course of nature, in order to give one of these nations of Palestine the victory over another. But in these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine, the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought, not for themselves only, but for us. It might follow that they should thus be accounted the enemies of all mankind: it might be that they were tempted by their very distinct-

¹ A city which was "devoted" to God by a curse could not be rebuilt, Deut. xiii. 15-17. But this seems to have been understood, in the case of Jericho, only to its being rebuilt as a fortified place; for we find it inhabited in the time of the Judges, and Joshua himself gave it to Benjamin. Jud. iii. 13. 2 Sam. x. 5. In the same way Agamemnon is said to have uttered a curse on Ilium, and Scipio on Carthage.

ness, to despise other nations. Still they did God's work; still they preserved, unhurt, the seed of eternal life, and were the ministers of blessing to all other nations, even though they themselves failed to enjoy it."¹

The country which now invited conquest lay before the camp of Israel as a great mass of hills, rising from the back of Jericho in height above height, till in its central elevation it towered fully 4,500 feet above the spot on which they stood. Western Palestine is, indeed, little more than a wide tangle of mountains, seamed by valleys, which on both sides run east and west, and form the only roads through the labyrinth. The Dead Sea close by Gilgal, lay 1,300 feet below the Mediterranean,² the city of Jericho standing about 600 feet above it; but many of the heights before them towered, at 12 or 14 miles' distance, to a height of 2,500 feet above its level. Some of the cliffs on the Dead Sea rose 2,000 feet above the waters below, but some hills beyond them, north of Hebron,³ rose 2,000 feet higher, and others, in various parts of the land, were still loftier.⁴ Bethlehem was 2,550 feet above the Mediterranean; Jebus, the future Jerusalem, 43 feet more; the hill behind it on the east, our Mount of Olives, 2,683; Neby Samuel, a little to the north, 2,935; Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, in the centre of the land at Shechem, rose to the height of 2,849 and 3,076 feet respectively; and Shechem itself lay in a valley 1,800 feet high, while the tops of Mount Carmel and Mount Tabor had almost the same elevation. Mount Jurmuk, a few miles north-west of the Sea of Galilee,

¹ *Arnold's Sermons*, vol. v. pp. 35-37.

² The Dead Sea is exactly 1,292 feet below the Mediterranean. Conder's Map, in *Handbook. Tent Work*, p. 214.

³ Râs esh Shukf is 2,579 feet above the level of the Dead Sea; Masada, 1,702 feet.

⁴ *Conder's Map*.

was 4,000 feet high; and the town of Safed, close by, looked over the country from a height of 2,800 feet. Nor were these the only heights worthy to be called mountains. Across the Jordan, "the hill of Bashan"¹ cast its shadow from an elevation of 5,900 feet, and, on the northern limit of the land, the great summits of Lebanon, "the white," attracted the eye from all parts of Palestine. That of Mount Hermon especially, over 9,000 feet high, closed the northern view from almost all points: from the plain along the coast, from the mountains of Samaria, from the plateau of Bashan, its pale blue snow-capped cone formed the grandest feature in the horizon.²

The whole land, however, "from Dan to Beersheba," was very small in proportion to the size of most countries, though roomy³ in contrast to the narrow ribbon of fertile land on the edges of the Nile, which has an average breadth of seven miles.⁴ It was in all only about the size of Wales. Except along the seashore, the one plain in the whole region large enough to be readily noticeable on the map, was that of Esdraelon, which measures fourteen miles north and south, by nine east and west, and runs into the land from the coast on the upper side of the Carmel hills; a range which stretches south-west from the Bay of Acre till it joins the hills of Samaria. Along the edge of the Mediterranean, however, a level strip runs from north to south the whole length of the country; narrow on the north, in Phenicia; broadening to an average of five miles before it reaches

¹ Jebel Djuelib, in the *Ledja*. The heights are taken from the Great Map of the Palestine Survey, and from Kiepert and Conder's Maps.

² Maclean's *Joshua*, p. 106.

³ Exod. iii. 8.

⁴ Orelli, *Durch's Heilige Land*, p. 42.

the promontory of Carmel, and forming a distinct district south of that point, under the names of the plains of Sharon and of Philistia. It has been formed partly by the waste of the central hills, partly by the accumulation of sand in dunes along the shore. Towards the south its breadth has been gradually increased by the deposit of mud from the mouths of the Nile, which is traceable as far north as Gaza. The surface is undulating, with low hillocks of hardened sand, and is naturally fertile. Deep gullies, running westward to the sea, carry down the drainage of the hills—some of them showing permanent streams, and all marked by high banks. Their waters, however, especially in the north, are dammed back before reaching the coast, and form marshes so extensive as to reduce the arable land about one-fourth. The “Maritime Plain,” as this tract is called, is about eighty miles long, and is raised from 100 to 200 feet above the sea, which it borders with a long line of low cliffs. Its breadth at its northern end, below Carmel, is eight miles; at Gaza about twenty.¹

Between this outside fringe and the mountains runs a breadth of low chalk hills, averaging about 500 feet in height, known in the Bible, if Lieut. Conder be right, as the Shephelah, though this name has hitherto been assumed to refer to the whole Maritime Plain.² Behind these rise, north and south, the masses of the central mountains, which, from the Mediterranean, seem like a purple wall of nearly equal height.

This truly highland region—the Canaan of the Bible—though now only a confusion of bare limestone hills,

¹ Conder's *Handbook to the Bible*, p. 215.

² See *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 480. Gesenius' *Lex.*, 8th edit., defines it as meaning “a low place,” and applies it to the lowlands from Joppa to Gaza. Conder's *Tent Work*, p. 276.

often painful from their sterility, was, in all probability, as richly wooded and as fertile in the days of Joshua as the hills and valleys of Gilead and Bashan are still. The destruction of the forests west of the Jordan, and the consequent drying up of the streams through the country, seem the only reasons for the strange contrast offered by its two sides. On the east, every valley has its ever-flowing brook, while not a few wide gorges pour down bright rushing streams, throughout the year, into the Jordan and Dead Sea. But on the west there is not a single permanent watercourse. Its wadys are only torrent beds, dry except after storms; though at times filled by these with wild floods which sweep all before them. Such torrent beds are, and have always been, the only available passes into the hills, from the lowlands on either side.

The ascent from Jericho to the central uplands must always have been through the gloomy defile of Wady Kelt, which rises between towering precipices of utterly bare rock, with steep and difficult footing, to the plateau above. In such a gorge, with many side clefts in the mountain walls, from which an enemy might at any moment break out to dispute the passage, it was necessary to use every precaution against surprise. At its upper end stood a town called Ai, "the ruins," commanding the road to Jebus, or Jerusalem, and the approaches to Central Palestine. Close to it, on another hill, rose Bethel, and both must be taken, to make farther advance possible. Spies, accordingly, were once more sent out to "view the country," but in this case their under-estimate of the strength of the enemy led to disaster. Two or three thousand men, they reported, were enough to take Ai, and it would be useless for more to be sent. About three thousand men therefore ascended the pass to attack it,

but only to meet with a repulse, and the loss of thirty-six of their number. Such a check at the very opening of the war was far more serious than it would have been later. The terror among the enemy, which was the strength of Israel, would at once cease with a gleam of success, and in that case the odds against Joshua would indeed be immense. Hitherto confident of victory, as the army of God, it seemed as if He had forsaken Israel, and "their hearts melted and became as water;" even Joshua, and the elders of the people, rending their clothes and putting dust on their heads in sign of profound mourning, and casting themselves on their faces before the Ark the whole day. A panic was on the point of setting in, if the people could not be roused and re-inspired. But the cause of the disaster was presently disclosed. The whole of the spoil of Jericho had been solemnly devoted to destruction, as if the possession of any part of it would bring pollution, and the prohibition had been obeyed with remarkable exactness. There had, however, been one exception. A man of the tribe of Judah, unfortunately for all, had taken some gold and silver and a mantle of fine Mesopotamian manufacture,¹ contrary to orders. It was a military as well as religious offence, for Joshua had no doubt felt

¹ Lit., "a mantle of Shinar." The looms of the Euphrates were famous in antiquity. "Assyrian garments," in later times, became a proverb. In the Nineveh sculptures the dress of the king consists of a long flowing garment descending to the ankles, elaborately embroidered, and edged with fringe and tassels. It was confined at the waist by a girdle, to which were attached cords with large tassels, falling down almost to the feet. Over this robe a second, nearly of the same length, but open in front, appears to have been thrown. It was also embroidered and edged with tassels. Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. ii. p. 319. See vol. i. p. 301. The discipline of the Hebrews must have been well nigh perfect, when Achan alone yielded to the temptation to plunder.

that to let his soldiers enrich themselves with the plunder of a wealthy city would weaken discipline, and dull the edge of the lofty enthusiasm which was their strength. The offender and his household, with all belonging to it, including even his cattle, were, therefore, at once separated from the camp; Achan being put to death, and his oxen, asses, and sheep destroyed, at the express command of God.¹ His body was then burnt, with the carcasses of the beasts, and all his property, and a huge cairn raised over them as a memorial. Some have thought that his wife and family were put to death with him, on the ground that his having buried the spoil in his tent implied their complicity in his crime, but the words do not seem to require this—the plural used, referring, it may be, to his cattle of various kinds.² If, however, the family perished, we may be assured of their guilt, for otherwise they would doubtless, like the children of Korah, have been spared.³

The capture of Ai, by a clever stratagem, was now at once effected. The whole district is full of deep gorges and hollows,⁴ and in some of these a force of 30,000 men was concealed behind the city, while another body of 5,000 showed itself in the ravine on the other side, and drew out the garrison after them by a pretended flight; the gates being left open and undefended. On this, at a signal given by Joshua, lifting up towards Ai the light spear which he always bore in his hand or kept slung at his back, the men in ambush pressed into the town, and having set it on fire, came out at the front gates to intercept the garrison as they rushed back. But they were already lost; for the feigned retreat now turned

¹ Josh. vii. 15.

² Köhler's *Lehrbuch*, p. 376. Hesse's *Joshua*, p. 102.

³ Num. xxvi. 11.

⁴ *Land and Book*, p. 671.

into a fierce attack in front and rear. In a few hours nothing remained of Ai but the blackened stones. Before night its king had been hanged on one of the trees near the town¹ and the inhabitants had perished, though the Israelites were permitted, in this case, to retain the spoil and the cattle.² Bethel, two miles west,³ also fell now into Joshua's hands, though it was apparently afterwards retaken by the Canaanites.

A sure footing in the land had now been obtained, and such a dread of the invaders excited amongst the inhabitants as of itself made them resistless. Indeed, the population of Central Palestine seems to have fled before them, for no intimation of a struggle with them is found either in Joshua or Judges. Perhaps the subdivision into small communities, incapable of prompt united action, may have aided the general demoralization, and it is noticeable besides, that very few fortified towns are mentioned in this region.⁴ But the terrible fate of Jericho and Ai sufficiently account for a universal panic, and abandonment of all, before the advancing Hebrews. There seems, indeed, to be an allusion to such a general flight, in a verse of Isaiah.⁵ "In that day," says he, "his strong cities shall be as the forsaken tract of the woodland, and of the summits, which men forsook because

¹ Deut. xxi. 22, 23, requires that a body shall not hang on a tree after sunset. The body was thus hung up only after death.

² The site of Ai is now called "The Tell," or mound of ruins. *Canon Williams*. See also *Pal. Fund Reports*, 1881, p. 36.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 37. Bethel lay 2,890 feet above the sea. *Great Pal. Map*.

⁴ Josh. ii. 9, 24; v. 1; ix. 9, 24. In the list of conquered cities in chap. xii. there are none in Central Palestine except Ai and Bethel. See vol. i. pp. 353-4.

⁵ Isa. xvii. 9. See *Tent Work in Palestine*, p. 43.

of the Children of Israel ;”¹ words which the Septuagint renders, more explicitly, “the cities will be forsaken, as the Amorites and the Hittites forsook theirs before the sons of Israel.” Some of the fugitives seem even to have emigrated to Africa, if we can trust the statement of Procopius² that two marble pillars were to be seen in the Numidian town Tigisis, with a Phenician inscription, in these terms—“We are those who fled from the face of Jesus (Joshua) the robber, the son of Nun.” Suidas³ states this also ; giving the words as—“We are Canaanites, whom Jesus the robber drove out,” and the Talmud states that the Girgasites driven out by Joshua wandered to Africa.⁴

Such amazing success opened the way soon after for an incident without parallel in the history of any other nation. God had commanded, through Moses,⁵ that the tribes should, as soon as practicable, assemble at Shechem, in the centre of the land, to renew their allegiance to Him, and to hear once more the proclamation of

¹ So *Gesenius* and *Ewald*. Thus, many Israelite cities were abandoned after the defeat of Gilboa. 1 Sam. xxxi. 7.

² *De Bello Vandalico*, ii. 10.

³ *s. v. Xavaáv*.

⁴ *Jerus. Tr. Schebiit*, vi. 36 c. *Ewald* rejects the story of *Procopius*, but *Graetz* accepts it. Joshua’s fierce measures at Jericho and Ai, like Cromwell’s storming of Drogheda, had proved more merciful in the end than a gentler course could have been. Joshua could have said, as Cromwell did after Drogheda, “I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future.”* But this sternness ended the Irish war. Had the Israelites followed up with vigour their first successes, nothing could have hindered their crushing all opposition, and rendering themselves absolute masters of the whole of Palestine for all time to come. But they left their work half done and paid a heavy penalty in consequence.

⁵ Deut. v. 11.

* *Carlyle’s Cromwell*, ii. 152.

the conditions on which He gave them the country. Accordingly, all the nation, including the women and children, and even the multitude of other races which had come up with them from Egypt, were led on a stupendous pilgrimage, from the banks of the Jordan at Gilgal, to the valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, in the midland hills. It was a spot sacred in the history of Israel, for there Abraham and Jacob had in turn pitched their tents, and there the latter had bought the field in which they were now to bury the mummy of Joseph, as he had commanded their forefathers, hundreds of years before. The well that Jacob had dug was also before their eyes, and the oak beneath which he had buried the idolatrous images and ear-rings of his encampment. The valley itself, perhaps, the most beautiful spot in Palestine, was worthy of the great national act they had assembled to perform. Running north and south, with a width of from a quarter to half a mile, it is hemmed in between the twin mountains Ebal and Gerizim, the summits of which are two miles apart, in a line. Bright rivulets fed, as the natives say, by no fewer than eighty springs, run down the slopes and sparkle over the sunny glen; gardens musical with many birds surround the walls of Nablus, the modern representative of Shechem, which nestles close under the shadow of Gerizim; figs, walnuts, mulberries, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, vines, and plums, filling the scene with rich luxuriance, the more striking by its vivid contrast with the barren stony mountains around. Gerizim, on the south side of the valley, towers 1,000 feet above it in a huge dome of chalk, hollowed into many caves at its foot, and surmounted by dark blue limestone rising in ledges and shelves to the summit. Ebal, on the north side, rises in a gentler slope of steel

blue rock, with precipitous cliffs atop, 200 feet higher than Gerizim; its north side, like that of the other hill, rich in springs, from the dip of the strata, but its south, even when richly covered with corn in summer, dependent on rain and irrigation for its fertility.¹ Thousands of flowers of every colour springing up amongst the grass, in the valley itself and on the slopes, in the meadows and open ground, make the spot still more delightful. Wherever water reaches, either naturally or otherwise, it is paradise, but above that limit the barrenness is well nigh complete. Yet it is a wondrous valley in the thirsty East.²

Having selected huge stones, and made them smooth with a coating of "plaster," Joshua caused an abstract of the Law to be inscribed on them, and then set them up on Mount Ebal.³ An altar of unhewn stones was next raised, close by them, that their erection might be consecrated by burnt sacrifices and peace offerings. The tribes which had sprung from the lawful wives of Jacob then took up their place on Mount Ebal, while those descended from the handmaids of Leah and Rachel, with Reuben, stood on the slopes of Mount Gerizim, the priests, with the Ark, occupying the valley between the two hills, surrounded by the elders, officers and judges of the nation. The whole Law, as given by Moses, was now read aloud to the vast multitude—those on Mount Ebal responding with a loud Amen to the rehearsal of the curses for disobedience, and those on Mount Gerizim,

¹ *Tent Work in Palestine*, p. 32. *Pal. Fund Rep.*, 1873, p. 70.

² Furrer's *Palästina*, p. 236.

³ Kiepert's map gives the heights above the Mediterranean as:—Ebal, 2,990 feet; the valley, 1,853 feet; Gerizim, 2,828 feet. Conder, 2,848·8 feet for Gerizim, and 3,076·5 for Ebal. *Tent Work*, pp. 33, 36.

similarly, to the recital of the blessings for obedience. Such a scene transacted¹ about twelve hundred years before the first Punic War,² and one thousand years before Socrates,³ is unique in the history of the world; for when did any other nation thus pledge itself to a high religious life as the recognized condition of its prosperity? Even the curses pronounced are peculiar to Israel; for they are directed not only against such crimes as murder; but also against idolatry; disobedience to parents; inhumanity to the blind, to strangers, widows, or orphans; or the removal of the landmark of a neighbour. Modern legislation is slowly striving towards a standard so generous, pure, and lofty.

That the laws should have been inscribed on plaster might seem ill fitted to secure their permanent preservation, but the dryness of the climate makes even such material as lasting as the hardest stone elsewhere. The inscriptions on the rocks at Sinai, though only surface scratches, are as distinct as ever, after perhaps two thousand years; and, in Egypt and Palestine, inscriptions and paintings, on plaster, are still, after the lapse of even longer periods,⁴ as perfect as when first made.

A difficulty has been raised as to the possibility of the voice being heard over the space required by so great a multitude, but Canon Tristram tells us that "a single voice might be heard by many thousands, shut in and conveyed up and down by the enclosing hills. In the early morning we could not only see from Gerizim

¹ The table in Schenkel's *Bibel Lexicon* gives B.C. 1420 as the date of the Conquest of Palestine. Ewald assigns B.C. 1460 as the date.

² B.C. 264-241.

³ B. B.C. 469-8, d. B.C. 399.

⁴ Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 471.

a man driving his ass down a path on Mount Ebal, but could hear every word he uttered, as he urged it; and in order to test the matter more certainly, on a subsequent occasion two of our party stationed themselves on opposite sides of the valley, and with perfect ease recited the commandments antiphonally.”¹

Having thus formally consecrated themselves once more to Jehovah, and having taken possession of Palestine in His name, subject to the condition of obedience to His Law, which He imposed—the vast multitude returned to Gilgal, which was still the head quarters of the tribes. But the lengthened interval of quiet which had followed the first victories was presently to be rudely disturbed. The conquest of the central district had alarmed the numerous petty kings of the Negeb and of the western lowlands, and led them for a time to league together, to drive back the invaders beyond the Jordan.

The submission of some Canaanite towns ² near Jebus

¹ Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 152. See also *Land and Book*, p. 473-4. At Masada, Tristram tells us, he and a friend could not only carry on a conversation with a third person at more than 600 yards distance, but several of the remarks made by Dr. Tristram and his friend to each other were distinctly heard. *Land of Moab*, p. 33. See also *Pal. Fund Rep.*, 1870, p. 58.

² The “cities” confederated with Gibeon, “the town on the hill,” were Chephirah,* eleven miles from Jerusalem, in Benjamin; Beeroth,† between Jerusalem and Bethel; and Kirjath-jearim, “the town of the groves,” in allusion to its olive, fig, and other plantations; four miles from Beeroth. They guarded the top of the pass of Beth-horon, which has always been the great route to the sea-places and the south. The “old sacks” were probably the large hair-cloth bags in which Orientals pack up, for convenient transport on the backs of animals, all they need for a journey, including their tent cover, boxes, pots, provisions, etc. A long

* The hamlet. † The wells.

or Jerusalem, brought matters to a crisis. Gibeon, the chief of these, hopeless of successful resistance, and anxious to escape destruction, had made peace with Joshua, and by their clever craft had secured their lives and those of their allies, though they were all degraded to permanent slavery. These towns, however, commanded the summit of the great passes to the coast and to the south, cutting off the inhabitants of these districts from those of the north, and leaving the invaders free to destroy each in turn. Taking advantage, therefore, of Joshua's absence at Gilgal, the chiefs, or "kings," of Jebus or Jerusalem; of Hebron, 20 miles south of it; of Jarmuth or Yarmuth, 16 miles south-west of it, a mile and a half off the road to Gath; of Lachish, 15 miles nearly south of Yarmuth, on the last slopes of the hill country, a strongly fortified town; and of Eglon, a town 10 miles east of Lachish, on the Gaza road; five in all, each with its petty district, banded together and, pressing up into the hill country, invested Gibeon, the elders of which instantly sent word to Joshua at Gilgal, demanding help. Acting with quick decision, he set off at once on receiving the summons, climbing all night up the Wady journey makes them look worn and old. "Wine bottles" are made of the skins of goats, etc., turned inside out. When torn, they are patched, or tied up with a cord. "Old shoes and clouted," are worn-out sandals, which are seldom seen, and would only be met with, under ordinary circumstances, after travelling far. The "old garments" were very unlike what an embassy should have worn, and seemed so strange as naturally to suggest a great distance from home. Bread is baked each day in the East, and becomes very hard when kept. The Gibeonites had only such as had been long baked, as if they had had no means of getting any since starting on their mission. They were made "Nethinim," "devoted to God," and had to discharge duties usually devolving on the lowest classes; hewing the wood and drawing the water for the Tabernacle and for the community.

Kelt, at the head of a great force of chosen men, and before sunrise had reached the open ground at the foot of the rounded hill on which Gibeon stands, and on which the "kings" were encamped. Such energy was in itself an earnest of victory. The sight of the foe, before whom nothing had hitherto stood, their sudden and terrible war cry and rushing onset, at once filled all hearts in the camp of the five towns with dismay, resulting forthwith in a headlong flight to the pass leading down to the plains. To reach this only one way offered; the long ascent to Upper Beth-horon, "the house of caves," and thence down the rough, rocky, and steep gorge leading to Beth-horon the Lower—a track stretching sometimes over the upturned edges of the limestone strata, sometimes over sheets of smooth rock, sometimes over smooth rectangular stones, sometimes over steps cut in the rock.¹ Rough as it was, however, it was, even in after days, "the king's way," as the only passage to the plains, or from thence to the hills. By it the Philistines were hereafter to invade Israel in the days of Saul.² Here Judas Maccabæus was to overcome the Syrian commander, Nicanor;³ and by this road St. Paul was to come as a prisoner, in his night's march to Cæsarea.⁴ Rushing in wild fear down the long gorge, with its walls of bare rock, the panic and destruction were increased by one of the sudden and terrible storms frequent in Palestine; great hailstones dashing heavily on them as they ran.⁵ Then occurred that incident

¹ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 242.

² 1 Sam. xiii. 18.

³ 1 Macc. vii. 39.

⁴ Acts xxiii. 31.

⁵ Thunder, lightning, and a deluge of hail (Jos., *Ant.*, V. i. 17). In 1859 a very similar disaster overtook the Austrians at the battle of Solferino. Commodore Porter describes a hail-storm on the Bosphorus in 1831, while he was crossing in a boat. One of

which had already been the theme of the poets of Israel before the Book of Joshua was written, and had been recorded in the "Book of Jasher," or "the Upright," apparently a collection of odes in praise of the heroes of Israel. The ascent from Gilgal, through the night, and the subsequent pursuit, left the sun still high, though the moon had begun to show its pale crescent in the west. But the wild storm darkened the sky, and it seemed possible, after all, that the enemy would escape and leave the victory incomplete, for the hills would ere long intercept the light.

"Then spake Joshua to Jehovah in the day when Jehovah delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,—

'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
And thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.'
And the sun stood still,
And the moon stayed,
Till the people had avenged themselves on their enemies.

"Is not this written," it is added, "in the Book of Jasher?"¹ Driving and driven, the pursuers and pur-

the boatmen had his hand literally smashed, a second was much injured in the shoulder, and the others were all more or less hurt. One hailstone broke the blade of an oar. Two men were killed on shore, and many had limbs broken. Some of the pieces of ice picked up were over a pound in weight, and many three-quarters of a pound.

¹ The Book of Jasher is also alluded to in 2 Sam. i. 18: "Also he—David—bade them teach the children of Israel the (song of the) bow: behold it is written in the Book of Jasher." The quotation from this book apparently ends at the close of verse 15, for it is evident that Joshua did not return to Gilgal immediately after the battle, but only after the campaign to the south country had closed (ver. 43). In explanation of the passage, Mr. Groser, Secretary of the Sunday School Union, says, verses 12 to 15, "as extracts from *recognized* poetry, should assuredly be treated

sued, in wild confusion rushed downwards to the plains; but at last the five kings, utterly exhausted and despairing, sought refuge in a cave at Makkedah on the edge of the lowland; only, however, to be presently discovered and blocked up in their hiding-place by a great stone, duly guarded while the merciless pursuit was continued. The great Maritime Plain had now been reached, with its numerous fortified cities, and in these the few who had escaped at length found safety for the time. Then, and not till then, Joshua returned, and having taken the five kings from their rude prison, after making his chief men place their feet on their necks,

as such. If the literal meaning were put on other passages of a similar kind, the result would be striking; as, for example, Deborah says that 'the stars in their courses fought against Sisera,' or 'the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord.'" The Rev. Samuel Cox thinks the true explanation is that Joshua besought God that the black clouds of the storm driving up the pass from the sea ought not be allowed to blot out the sun and thus bring night prematurely, before his victory was complete. When the sun shone out again from the tempest, and the moon stood clear in the sky, his prayer would be answered.

"It is astonishing," says Herder, "that this fine passage has been so long misunderstood. Joshua attacked the Amorites in the early morning, and the battle continued till night; that is, for a long day which seemed to protract itself into night, to complete the victory. The sun and moon were witnesses of Joshua's great deeds, and held their course in the midst of heaven till the triumph was perfect. Who does not recognize this as poetry, even if it had not been quoted from the Book of Poems on Heroes. In the usual language of the Hebrews such expressions were neither bold nor unusual." *Heb. Poesie*, vol. i. p. 237.

Agamemon, in the *Iliad*, utters the same prayer as Joshua:—

"Jove greatest, Jove most glorious, sky dweller, cloud bedight,
Let not the sun nor darkness fall and wrap the world in night,
Till Priam's stately palace I cast in ruin low."—*Iliad*, ii. 412.

as a sign of triumph over enemies lately so dreaded, himself speared or ran them through, and ordered their dead bodies, as a mark of additional dishonour, to be hung up on trees till the evening, when they were taken down, as the Jewish law required,¹ and thrown ignominiously into the cave.

But the campaign was not yet ended, for the foe might rally if left in quiet. Town after town on the plain was therefore stormed—as far as Hebron in the south, and round by the Negeb, below the hills of Judea; nor did the army return to Gilgal till the whole of the hill country, the lowlands, and the slopes, “with all their kings,” had been overrun and for the time subdued.²

The centre and the south of Palestine had now been conquered, and the Israelites had secured a solid footing in the land. But resistance still smouldered, for the north had not been invaded, and there were yet Canaanite communities in different parts that had escaped the brunt of war. The destruction of Jericho; the sacking and burning of Ai and Bethel; the submission of Gideon and its confederate towns; the surrender of Central Palestine by the flight of its inhabitants; the crushing defeat of the southern kings, and the seizure of their territory, showed that the Hebrew occupation threatened the whole land. A final league of native chiefs whose populations still furnished the materials of a fighting host was therefore formed, to stem the invasion, if possible. The head of this confederation was Jabin, “he whom God watches,” king of Hazor, “the enclosed” or “fortified,” in the northern hills, half-way between the sea-coast and Lake Merom. Invitations to join a general rising were sent out by him to the chiefs of Madon, a place possibly represented by the ruin Madin, west

¹ Deut. xxi. 23.

² Josh. x. 40.

of the Sea of Galilee;¹ of Shimron, the present village Simunieh, west of Nazareth; and of Achshaph, the existing village El Yasif, in the tribe of Asher; to the far off chiefs on the north, in the mountains, towards Lebanon; to those in the Ghor of the Jordan, south of the sea of Galilee; to those in the lowlands and elsewhere, and to Dor, a city on the coast, near Mount Carmel;² to all the Canaanites, in fact, east and west; to the Amorites, Hittites, and Perizzites throughout the land; to the Jebusites on the hill of the future Jerusalem, in the south; and to the Hivites under Mount Hermon in the north. All alike eagerly embraced the opportunity of making one last grand struggle to crush the invader. It was a final and supreme effort, like that of our forefathers in Northumberland, after the defeat of Senlac. A host gathered "as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude," with a great force of chariots and horses, which Israel had only footmen to oppose. The rendezvous of this great confederation was appointed on the plains east of Lake Merom, the present El Huleh, half-way between the Sea of Galilee and the mountains of Lebanon, and there they speedily gathered.

But Joshua, though now a man of about ninety, was equal to the emergency. The tribes, who were still encamped at Gilgal, ready for battle at any moment, were called out at once, and by a swift and secret march, succeeded in taking the foe by surprise, which, as usual in an Eastern army, led to a precipitate and confused flight. Then, once more, came the fierce pursuit and relentless slaughter for thirty miles straight north over the hills, probably by the camel path still used, past Laish and Ijon; then over the cleft of the Leontes, north-west, as

¹ Conder's *Handbook*, p. 425.

² *Bibel Lex.*, art. *Dor*.

far as Sidon and Misrephoth-maim,¹ on the coast, with its limekilns and smelting furnaces. Nor did it end till Mizpeh, the watch tower, far off, at the foot of Lebanon, was reached.

An ordinary army, after such a victory, would have prized above all else, the opportunity of putting themselves on an equal footing with their enemy, by utilizing the captured horses and chariots, they themselves having none. But the enthusiasm of the Israelites, divinely led, set no value on such human aid. They believed that the invisible chariots of God were amongst them. One of their inspired poets at a later date only embodied the feelings of Joshua's host, when he sang :—

“The Almighty scattered kings in it;

It was white (with the robes or armour of the slain) as snow on Mount Salmon;²

The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands twice told over;

Jehovah is among them.”³

As through many subsequent generations of warriors, one sentiment animated every bosom, as the host swept on to the charge, or met that of their foes :—

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses;

But we will remember the name of Jehovah, our God.”⁴

The battle was “not theirs but God's,”⁵ and, as in the past, the horses were crippled and the chariots burnt, in obedience to Divine command.⁶ Jabin's capital, Hazor, was levelled with the ground, but the towns which stood on hills were preserved for the use of the victors them-

¹ Conder, p. 420. Apparently the ancient Sarepta, now known as Sarafem. The word means “burnings by the waters”

² A hill near Mount Gerizim.

³ Ps. lxxviii. 14, 17.

⁴ Ps. xx. 7.

⁵ 1 Sam. xvii. 47. 2 Chron. xx. 15.

⁶ Josh. xi. 6.

selves, as more easily defensible. The spoil of the cities and towns, moreover, and their cattle, were distributed among the conquerors; the women and children taken as slaves, and the male prisoners put to death, as was the custom of the age.

Thus, in the words of Scripture,¹ Israel had received from God "great and goodly and strong cities which they had not built; houses full of all good things, which they had not filled; wells dug, which they had not digged; vineyards and olive trees which they had not planted; fruit trees in abundance, and a fat land."

The division, among the tribes, of the territory thus gained, was the next great work. Five years had passed since the crossing of the Jordan,² and their leader was "still as strong as in the day when Moses had sent him, forty-five years before, from Kadesh Barnea, to spy out the land."³ A great popular assembly was held at Gilgal,⁴ under the presidency of Joshua, Eleazar the high priest, and the elders. Two and a half tribes had already secured their share of the conquests, on the east of the Jordan, and thus nine and a half had to be provided for. Over all these the great tribe of Joseph, divided into the two sections of Ephraim and Manasseh, claimed precedence, at once from their descent, and from the fact that Joshua belonged to their number. They demanded, therefore, the best part of the country—the central hills, which are specially rich in water and very fruitful, and apparently acted at once, of their own accord, in the matter; Ephraim taking possession of the part north and south of Shechem, with its rolling hills

¹ Deut. vi. 10, 11. See also Neh. ix. 25.

² Josh. xiv. 10. Diestel, in *Riehm* (p. 770), thinks the war lasted seven years. So does Lengerke (*Kanaan*), p. 647.

³ Josh. xiv. 7, 11.

⁴ Josh. xiv. 6.

and sunny valleys. Shechem¹ itself, where the bones of Joseph were now buried, and where Abraham and Jacob had long encamped, thus became their chief town, and, from its central position, in a measure the capital of the whole country. The half tribe of Manasseh, which had abandoned tent life, and thrown in its lot with Ephraim, had the district immediately to the north of this, but they were cramped in their limits by the presence of Canaanite fortresses in the rich plain of Esdraelon, which they coveted. Assuming that Joshua, as one of themselves, would not refuse, the united 'House of Joseph,' therefore, asked him to let the other tribes help them to drive out the enemy. But he was less pliable than they had hoped. "The hill country is not enough for us," said they, "and all the Canaanites that dwell in the valley-land have chariots of iron, both they of Bethshean (in the rich Jordan depression, east of Gilboa) and her towns, and they who are of the plain of Esdraelon." "Thou art a great people," replied the hoary leader, with subdued irony, "and hast great power; thou shalt not have one lot only. The hill country shall be thine; it is now forest, but thou shalt cut it down;² even its outlying parts shall be thine; for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong."³ Disappointed, thus, in their selfish schemes, they contented themselves with what they had received.

The breaking up of the great camp by this separation

¹ See vol. i. p. 440.

² This verse seems to connect the destruction of the forests of Western Palestine with the Israelite invasion. But the loss of the trees has destroyed the water supply, to the permanent injury of the country.

³ Josh. xvii. 16-18.

of the tribe of Joseph from it, was the signal for the rest to take similar care for their own future. Four tribes turned their eyes to the north, and four to the south. Finding, it may be, the land northward opened to them in a measure by the victory over Jabin; the former descended into Esdraelon, and pushed their way gradually to the foot of Hermon. Naphtali and Asher occupied, between them, the high lands stretching from the Jordan to the Phenician plain, along the sea-coast, on the east and west; the portion of Asher reaching from Carmel northwards, and that of Naphtali bending upwards from the south of the Sea of Galilee, to meet it. But Asher could not, any more than Ephraim, hold his own against the chariots of the Canaanites, and was soon contented to live among them,¹ rejoicing in the possession of some of the richest land in Palestine, which yielded the oil in which he was to "dip his foot," the "bread," which was to be "fat," and "the royal dainties," in which he was to delight.² Sinking into purveyors for the Phenician cities, they soon lost their high tone, until national spirit had so faded away, that when Zebulon and Naphtali "jeopardied their lives to the death," in the struggle against Sisera, Asher cravenly sought its own interests in the havens and villages of its heathen allies.³ Naphtali held the interior of Upper Galilee, with its lofty heights, from one of which the city of Safed⁴ looks down, at an elevation of 2,700

¹ Jud. i. 31, 32.

² Gen. xlix. 20. Deut. xxxiii. 24.

³ Jud. v. 17, 18. For the crops of Asher's district, see *Robinson*, vol. iii. p. 102. Kenrick's *Phenicia*, p. 31. *Reland*, p. 817. The Phenician coast cities, Acre, Sidon and Tyre, with their vast maritime activity, lay at the foot of the mountains of Asher.

⁴ The "high watch tower." *Sepp*, vol. ii. p. 201.

feet above the sea. Rich forests still clothe the mountains,¹ and the valleys boast of soil as rich as any in the land. Such a region could only have been conquered or held by a brave-hearted people, and this character Naphtali always retained. In the blessing of Jacob, the tribe is compared to a towering terebinth, with a goodly crest,² and they showed themselves at all times worthy of so proud a symbol. The district obtained by Zebulon ran across from the Kishon to the Jordan, including the country round Nazareth, and the hills on the north side of Esdraelon. It enjoyed, like Naphtali, the fisheries of the sea of Galilee, and it had also the agricultural wealth of the plain of El Battauf, behind Nazareth, while, fortunately for itself, its bounds did not reach to the open sweep of Esdraelon, which was beyond all parts else exposed to war. Up among the hills, it, too, like Naphtali, preserved its manly vigour, and bore itself nobly in the struggle for freedom, against the swarming enemy around. The tribe of Issachar had, in one sense, perhaps the finest position in the country—for it made its home in the rich plain of Esdraelon. But it was able to do so only at the price of its independence, for the strong Canaanite city of Acre guarded it on the west, and that of Bethshean at its eastern end, while the fortresses of Taanach and Harosheth overlooked it from spurs of the southern hills.³ But “he saw that rest was good and the land

¹ *Van de Velde*, vol. i. p. 293.

² *Ewald's Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 380.

³ Then, as now, the plain itself had apparently no towns; the terrors of Arab inroads driving the settled population to the shelter of the hills north and south. The plain was no doubt tilled throughout, but the homes of the people were chiefly on the neighbouring heights.

pleasant, and he bowed his back to bear, and became a slave to tribute." The blessing of Jacob rightly described him, as "a strong boned he-ass"—the heavy beast for the field, not that for the pad—"couching down between two hedgerows,"¹ resting in dull quiet and ease. From the first, the tribe fell back from its manhood, and it bore only a very subordinate part in the future history of the nation.²

The remaining tribes sought homes in the south, with more or less mutual help, but without any organized support of the whole people. The small tribe of Benjamin,—a client, in some sense, of Ephraim, and only separated from it in sympathies after the final division of the kingdom under Rehoboam—obtained a confined but fruitful district on the south of its great patron tribe; embracing whatever it could conquer of the space between Jerusalem on the south, and Bethel on the north, and from the Jordan to the west side of the central hills. The Gibeonites and their connected towns thus lived in their midst, while, on the south, the Jebusites held the strong fortress, hereafter to become Jerusalem. But the bravery and vigour of the tribe were in striking contrast to its numerical weakness. Ephraim, in fact, owed to it much of its military strength. Always ready to maintain its quarrels by its slingers and bowmen, who were famous for their skill and courage,³ and by its swordsmen, who were noted for

¹ Gen. xlix. 15, 16.

² Graetz thinks that the battle of Merom was fought only by the northern tribes, and that it took place as the result of Naphtali and Asher invading the territories of Jabin and his allies, to obtain the districts allotted them. *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 67.

³ Gen. xlix. 27. Jud. xx. 15. 1 Chron. xii. 2.

equal dexterity in the use of their weapon with either hand, it was pre-eminently a soldier clan.

The great tribe of Judah,¹ which, at the conquest, boasted more fighting men than Ephraim, and had a higher military reputation, early entered into possession of its portion of the land. The districts assigned to the seven smaller tribes were fixed by lot, after their limits had been determined by three men chosen from each, but the enjoyment of the award was left to the future, when the Canaanites should be dispossessed, which they too often never were. With Judah, however, the case was different. Acting independently, like Ephraim, it at once invaded the territory it had chosen, though it had to struggle long for its quiet possession. It seems as if it had felt itself aggrieved by the seizure of the richest part of the country by the descendants of Joseph, and had withdrawn as far as possible from them. The Kenites,² who were not only allies but related in blood, had already settled in the far south, on the edge of the desert, and it appears to have turned to them to find a home the more easily by their help. Jerusalem, itself, fell before its fierce attack, and was burned,³ but only to be recovered, after a short time, by the Jebusites, in whose hands it was left without further struggle. But though this central stronghold was lost, Judah still held the land on all sides of it except the north, and appears even to have become friendly with its possessors. The limits gained were soon, however, too strait, and had to be widened by successive wars, in which Siméon lent useful aid.⁴

¹ The tribe of Judah was known, from the time of Isaiah, as the House of Jacob, in contrast to Ephraim and the northern tribes who, as has been noticed, were spoken of as the House of Joseph. Isa. ii. 5, 6; viii. 17; xiv. 1, etc.

² See page 369.

³ Jud. i. 7, 8.

⁴ Jud. i. 3.

The first conquest in these tribal campaigns was the town and district of Bezek, in the Maritime Plain, south of Lydda. The ferocious boast of its "king"—a petty tyrant—that he had overthrown seventy "kings," and after miserably maiming them, had let them gather their meat under his table, throws a strong light on the character of the times. The sternness, which inflicted on such a monster the misery he had caused to so many of his equals, was only just retribution.¹

The town and district of Hebron fell next before the fierce invaders. It had passed again into the power of the Canaanites since Joshua had taken it,² but Caleb, the the only other survivor of the spies of forty-five years before,³ claimed it, at once on the ground of a promise from Moses and as a gift from Joshua. He had passed through it in his dangerous journey as a spy, when in his full manly strength, but he eagerly urged that, old as he was, he was still as able to fight as when at his best, and demanded to lead the attacking force.⁴ The finest grapes of Palestine grew on the slopes of its valley, and it was specially dear to the Israelite, as the site of the cave of Machpelah, in which lay the bodies of the founders of the race. A remnant of the once dreaded Anakim held it, but nothing could resist the fierceness and determination of Caleb and his men, and the town and district passed into his possession, to become henceforth the capital of the southern tribes, till the storming of Jebus, in the time of David.

Debir, "the oracle town," called, formerly, Kiriath Sepher, "the book town," about three miles west of

¹ The Athenians cut off the thumbs of all the men of Egina who fell into their hands, to prevent their holding the lance again. *Valerius Max.*, IX. ii. 8.

² Josh. x. 36, 37.

³ Josh. xiv. 6-15.

⁴ Josh. xv. 14.

Hebron, next invited conquest, and, to kindle enthusiasm, the hand of a daughter of Caleb was offered as a prize to any brave leader who should take it. Such a hero was presently found, in the person of Othniel, "the Lion of God," a younger brother of Caleb,¹ and Achsah his niece forthwith became his bride. But the new conquest lay on the edge of the Negeb, outside the rich valley of Hebron, and the prospect of such an inheritance did not please the damsel, when Othniel, her husband, led her home to it, doubtless with a great cavalcade of his friends, amidst gladdening music;² Caleb himself accompanying the procession, to do the young pair honour. Suddenly alighting from her ass, as if some misfortune had befallen her, she begged her father "to give her a dowry" worthy of the name, "for you have given me a waterless place;" "pray give me the springs of water" yonder "as well:" apparently those which gush out at the "Carmel" of Judah, where the fruitful plain of Hebron slopes down eastwardly to the less favoured Negeb.³

Zephath, the ancient enemy of Israel, was now also destroyed, its site receiving the appropriate name of Hormah, or "desolation."⁴ Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron,⁵ strong cities on the rich Maritime Plain, were also, like Jerusalem, taken and held for a time, but the chariots of the Canaanites made them untenable, and Judah had to retire again to the hills. But while Asher and Naph-tali had to guard the northern marches, Judah was safe on the southern border, protected by the friendly Kenites, descendants of Jethro's tribe, and even by Arabs, with

¹ Jud. i. 13; iii. 9. 1 Chron. iv. 13. Some, however, think he was Caleb's nephew.

² Van Lennep's *Bible Lands*, etc., p. 550.

³ Wilton, *The Negeb*, vol. i. p. 6. ⁴ Jud. i. 17. ⁵ Jud. i. 18.

whom it formed alliances.¹ On the west the lowland population was too strong for it; on the east, a terrible wilderness stretched from the line of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. Only the hill country between remained, therefore, to the tribe.

Simeon had at first been stronger than Judah, but soon decayed under the adverse influences of its history. Its lot had fallen in the Negeb or South Country, embracing, in a wide sweep, all the land between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean, as far south as the Wady el Arish, or "River of Egypt." At first, with the help of Judah, it had been able to seize some of the rich towns in the plains, but it soon lost them, and had, henceforth, to live under the protection of its neighbour, with no well defined territory, and with not even a single town it could call its own. The downs that had fallen to its lot served for pasturage to wandering camps, but the bulk of the tribe lived in the cities of Judah, though without having any voice in their councils. It kept its distinctness, however, as late as the times of David, but ultimately was almost entirely lost in the stronger tribe.

The fortunes of Dan were even harder than those of Simeon. Nominally, its territory extended from the west of that of Ephraim and Benjamin, to the sea-coast, thus including the districts of the cities of Lydda, Ekron, Beth-Dagon, and Joppa; but though it overran these at first, it was forced back,² ere long, into the hills, where the available space was quite inadequate to the wants of a community boasting of 64,000 fighting men. Having no patron tribe such as Simeon or Benjamin enjoyed, it seems to have been forced, for a long time, to lead a

¹ Thus Abigail, David's sister, was married to an Ishmaelite.
1 Chron. ii. 17.

² Josh. xix. 41. Jud. i. 34, 35. 1 Sam. vii. 15.

camp life, crowded together in a spot known, even in later times, as the "Camp of Dan,"¹ near Kiriath Jearim, "the forest city," a few miles west of Jerusalem, on the confines of Benjamin and Judah. Such a state of things, however, was soon intolerable, and as we shall hereafter have to notice more fully, drove a number of the Danites to emigrate to the north, where detached Canaanite communities offered an easy prey. Six hundred men, therefore, with their wives and children, wandered to the foot of Mount Hermon, and having overcome some Sidonians living there, took their land, which was of extraordinary fertility, and changed the name of the conquered town from Laish to Dan.²

The tribe of Levi having been separated to the offices of religion, was appointed to receive its support from the community at large, and, therefore, had no distinct territory assigned it. It was to receive the tithes of the whole produce of the land, from which, however, it was required to pay a tithe to the priests, in acknowledgment of their higher consecration. Forty-eight towns, with a circle of meadow land round each, for the pasturage of its flocks and herds were, however, set apart for its residence, all over the country, that its services, required in many ways, might be everywhere available. To appoint these towns, of which three on each side of the Jordan were cities of refuge, to which the manslayer might flee, was the last public act of Joshua.

It would seem, from what has been said, that the whole country had at first been invaded, and, in a measure, conquered, but that a reaction soon began, by which the Canaanites speedily recovered themselves, so as to drive out the Israelites, in their turn, from all the lowlands, to the difficult mountain heights and valleys. It must thus

¹ Jud. xiii. 25; xviii. 12. ² Josh. xix. 47. Jud. xviii. 27-29.

have required many years, before the tribes were in any measure peaceably in possession even of what they ultimately retained.¹ The Book of Judges, indeed, recalls a slow conquest, like that by which the old English, step by step, drove back the native British, or the French gained fast hold of Algeria. Without cavalry or horses, the Hebrews might overrun the country, but could hold only the parts capable of natural defence, and, hence, Canaanite strongholds showed themselves permanently, like islands, in every direction, above the flood of the intruding population. Yet Israel tenaciously held its ground, and, in the end, overpowered the native element; making the whole country, except the sea-coast, thoroughly its own.² The untrained vigour of its warriors, however, contrasted with the developed military skill and appliances they overcame, only intensified the feeling, that they were indebted for their triumph to a higher than human power, and this sentiment continued vivid, century after century.

“O God,” [writes a Psalmist,] “we have heard with our ears,
Our forefathers have told us,
What wonders Thou didst in their day;
In the days of old.
How Thou didst drive out and uproot the heathen with Thy
hand;
How Thou didst break in pieces the nations and cast them out.
For they [Israel] got not the land with their own sword,
Neither did their own arm save them:
But Thy right hand and Thine arm,
And because the light of Thy countenance was favourable to
them.”³

¹ Josh. xvii. 15-18. Jud. i. 19, 34.

² Deut. xxxii. 18; xxxiii. 29. Ps. xviii. 34. Is. lviii. 14. Hab. iii. 19.

³ Ps. xli. I have adopted one or two modifications from Graetz

Gilgal continued the centre of the nation and the seat of the Tabernacle and of the Ark as long as the country was still disturbed; the Levites and the high priest naturally fixing their dwellings beside the sanctuary. It thus attained a measure of sacredness which long survived; popular assemblies being gathered at it, and pilgrimages made to it.¹ But its position was unsuited as a permanent capital, and hence, as soon as the tribes separated to their respective territories, the Tabernacle was removed to the previously insignificant Shiloh, a more central locality, in the hills of Ephraim, Joshua's tribe, where it continued for centuries.² Thus the religious metropolis was distinct from the political; Shiloh being the one and Shechem the other. It seems strange that Bethel—hallowed by so many memories of the patriarchs—should not have been chosen; but there are indications of a long struggle for that spot, again and again renewed, which rendered it unsafe for a treasure so sacred as the Ark.³

The great war of conquest being ended, Joshua laid aside his office and retired to a well-earned retreat at Timnath-serah, in his own tribe of Ephraim;⁴ exercising henceforth only a moral power, which was readily acknowledged. But his retirement was the beginning of a national decline. The constitution of Israel permitted no king or ruler except in war, and the tribes naturally reverted more and more to a simple patriarchal government, which, though favourable to the development of popular liberty, tended to isolation and weakness, and made energetic and prompt action at any time difficult. The determination to extend their limits and, at the same

¹ Hosea iv. 15; ix. 15; xii. 12. Amos iv. 4; v. 5.

² 1 Sam. i. 3. Ps. lxxviii. 60, 68. Jer. vii. 12.

³ *Ewald*, vol. ii. p. 393. ⁴ Josh. xix. 50.

time, to act apart, was a fruitful source of danger, nor could the same vigorous national spirit, or the same high religious tone as hitherto be maintained, when the commonwealth was broken up into fragments. The closing years of Joshua's life were thus like the waning of the moon, in which darkness grows ever deeper—a darkness reflected in his addresses to the people, urging on them, with intense earnestness, the necessity of honouring the covenant they had made with Jehovah at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, as their fathers had at Sinai. Shortly before his death, indeed, he felt it necessary to make them solemnly renew it, and raise a stone memorial of their having done so.¹ At last, twenty-five years after crossing the Jordan, he died at his own inheritance, full of years and glory, at the age of 110, and the light of Israel for the time faded away.

It was left to the investigations of our own day to link together the present and the distant past, by the discovery of what seems almost beyond question to be the tomb of the great successor of Moses. M. Victor Guérin, who has the credit of this striking identification, writes of it thus :² “ Two hours and a half north-west of of Djufna, the ancient Gophna, are the ruins of Tibneh. They cover the slopes and the crest of a hill which is surrounded on the north and east by a deep ravine. On the south side, the hill sinks, in terraces, to a valley formerly covered in part with houses, and marked by a magnificent evergreen oak, which is one of the finest in Palestine. Advancing still south, the last slopes of a hill facing Tibneh are met : their rocky sides revealing several tombs, the remains of an ancient necropolis. On the top of the height is a small Mussulman village, with

¹ Josh. xxiv. 26. ² In a note read by him at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, 28th Oct., 1864.

several ancient cisterns, and a number of finely-cut stones of antique masonry built into the modern houses.

“The tombs have been hewn out at different levels on the north slopes of the hill, eight being more noticeable than the rest. One, however, is much the most remarkable. An oblong vestibule cut in the rock is supported by four pillars, two, at the side, half separated from the hill: the others, in the centre, entirely so. They have no capitals, and are ornamented at their tops only by a few simple mouldings. Immediately behind them, the face of the rock, forming the front wall of the tomb, is pierced by no fewer than 288 small openings, in eight rows; some square, some triangular, but mostly half-round. At the right side of this rock partition is the low and narrow door of the tomb, leading into a chamber with fifteen compartments, of which, however, only fourteen have been intended to receive the dead. The place of honour in this pale assembly was evidently reserved for the occupant of a small chamber facing the entry: the other loculi being designed for members of his family.”

“A first sight of this tomb forces the conclusion that it was intended for some one very illustrious, whose place of rest was honoured, from time to time, with solemn illuminations by lamps, placed in the multitude of small niches in the vestibule. It is not rare to see a few such in the interior of tombs, but there is no other instance of provision being made for illumination from the outside. No one can be fancied as reckoned worthy of such honour but one who was an object of public veneration, and who could this be at what is seemingly beyond doubt Timnath-serah—but Joshua?”¹

“The tomb shows marks of the highest antiquity, for it is similar to those made by the Canaanites for them-

¹ M. Guérin here goes into details of the identification.

selves, before the arrival of the Hebrews in their country. The very measures used in its construction seem, on close examination, to be the old Egyptian system, which the Hebrews, as we know, brought with them from the Nile."

In 1870, moreover, additional confirmation of this being really the tomb of Joshua, was obtained from a discovery made in it by the Abbé Richard. He had just explored the ruins of Gilgal, where Joshua caused the sons of Israel to be circumcised with stone knives, and gathered in a radius of a few kilometres, after so many centuries, a large number of small flint knives, scattered over the ground, and sometimes buried in it. But as it is said in our Greek Bible, that the Israelites, when they interred Joshua, buried with him the flint knives which they had used for circumcision at Gilgal, the Abbé determined to search whether any such knives still remained in the tomb which was reputed to be his, at Timneh—or Timnath-serah.¹ Judge of his delight, then, when on a visit to the tomb, in company with a priest from Jerusalem and the sheik of the village El-Birzeit, he found in it a great number of flint knives, in the soil of the different sepulchral chambers.²

¹ Two passages in the Septuagint record this. 1st. Josh. xxi. 42, "And they gave him (Joshua) the city which he had asked—Thamnasarach, in Mount Ephraim, and Joshua built the city and lived in it. And Joshua took the knives of circumcision, with which he had circumcised the sons of Israel on the journey in the desert, and laid them up in Thamnasarach." 2nd. Chap. xxiv. 30, "And they buried him in Thamnasarach in Mount Ephraim, in the north of Mount Galaad (Gaas, in *Jud.*, ii. 9). And they placed by him, for a memorial, the stone knives with which he had circumcised the sons of Israel in Gilgal when he led them from Egypt as the Lord commanded. *And they are there to this day.*"

² Guérin, *Descrip. de la Palestine; Samarie*, vol. ii. pp. 100-102. See also Lieut. Conder, in *Pal. Fund Reports*, 1878, p. 22. In *Tent Work*, p. 118, however, he questions the identification.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES.

MOSES had given Israel a body of civil and religious law, but he had left them without anything equivalent to a political constitution. His great aim had been to establish among them the worship of Jehovah as their invisible King and God, so firmly, as to preclude the possibility of their falling permanently from it. He had found established a body of customs and laws, sanctioned by immemorial usage in the Hebrew tribes and other branches of the Arab race, who were, like themselves, descendants of Abraham,—and had necessarily adopted these, after purifying them from all idolatrous taints and raising them in their details to as high a moral tone as was possible in such an age.¹ But he had silently omitted any reference to a special political order; his only allusion to a possible change being that, if kings were hereafter appointed, they should avoid having great numbers of horses, lest it should promote intercourse with Egypt, from which *horses* were mostly obtained; that in the same way they should not multiply wives, lest they should be led by them into idolatry; and that they should not amass great treasures of silver and gold.² Hence, on the separation of the tribes to their respective

¹ Jer. vii. 22. Matt. vi. 38. Matt. xix. 8.

² Deut. xvii. 14–20.

territories, they at once reverted to the patriarchal simplicity of their ancestors. As in the tents of Abraham, the father of the family was the ruler, and his authority passed to his descendants in the person of the eldest son, through successive generations. Michaelis fitly compares this primitive organization of society, which was that of all the Arab tribes, as well as of the Hebrews, to the clans of the Scotch Highlanders.¹ It had prevailed in the slave huts of Egypt, and survived to the time of Saul. The chiefs of the tribe and of its subordinate sections, in due limitation, commanded, and all its members obeyed. The complicated intricacy of our system of government was unknown, and would have been useless, for there were only fathers and children. Not only had the Hebrews no diplomatic relations with other nations; they had neither commerce nor manufactures, and hardly any bond existed even between the different tribes.

There was, hence, no central and supreme power, because there was no national government or administration. Each tribe was independent; all the local authorities were hereditary; no new laws were made, for those of Moses were final; there were no public enterprises, for such things were unknown. There were, in fact, strictly speaking, no functionaries to appoint or to pay; no public exchequer; neither taxes, nor duties, unless the tithe payable to the priests and Levites be regarded as a tax, and not, rather, as a quit rent imposed by God on the tribes, in return for their enjoyment of the land, and ordered by Him to be paid to His representatives who had had only some towns allowed them.

This simplicity in social organization characterized private life no less than public. As each village was self-

¹ *Mosaisches Recht*, vol. i. § xlvi. p. 262.

complete and independent, except in its shadowy relation to the chief of the tribe, so each family had within itself nearly all it required. Much that seems indispensable to us was as unknown and useless as it is to the Bedouin of to-day. Of our artificial tastes, our refinements of luxury and of the table, the Hebrews knew nothing. There was no working class among them; and only here and there the few crafts needed for their elementary wants. All lived on the produce of the field or flock. The wheat had been grown by the householder himself; the flesh and milk of his sheep or goats and the fruit of his vine, or fig-tree, were his constant food. His clothes were spun, woven and sewed by the women of the household, and they baked his bread and cooked his meals; there were no arts or trades, neither shoemakers, bakers, grocers nor butchers; only farmers and shepherds. Commerce was limited to an occasional exchange of the produce of the land, or of the flock, with the busy Phenicians or with passing caravans, for some rich cloth or jewels, or for arms, or articles of utility. The community was as independent in the wants of life as in government.

Nor were there any special arrangements such as we have, to maintain peace and order. There were neither judges to dispense justice, police to guard the laws, nor court houses for the trial of offenders. The elders of each petty community decided cases at the gate of the village or town, and the execution of their sentences was carried out by those interested, without the intervention of public officers. In the same way private transactions were settled at the gate, without lawyers and without writing, but before the inhabitants, who served as witnesses.¹

¹ Gen. xxiii. 3 ff. Ruth iv. 1 ff. See vol. i. p. 403.

In only two cases was a higher authority than the heads of families or clans felt to be needed: in difficult legal questions, and in the event of war. For the first of these Moses had provided, but nothing had been determined as regarded the other.

If the elders could not settle any special dispute, or if their decision were questioned, recourse was to be had to the priests;¹ the only rule, in the Mosaic legislation, which in any measure bound the whole nation together in their civil relations. But, as has been said, no provision was made in reference to war. There was no standing army, and the endless subdivision of the community into independent fragments made one, in our sense, impossible. Professional soldiers, in fact, did not exist, nor was there any disciplined force whatever. If the country were invaded, each man armed himself as he could, and followed the head of his village, who led his contingent to the rallying place of the clan; perhaps at some point where all the other clans of the same tribe were to meet; but in such hasty gatherings, when those only who chose assembled, there was neither gradation of rank nor any military order. Organized battalions, payment of troops, uniform, commissariat, or strategy were alike unknown. Force or surprise were the only military conceptions. Each man supplied his own food,² or got it by plunder, or by a requisition of the band on some town or individual.³ There was no provision for any lengthened campaign, such as our ancient militia undertook in our civil wars or in France, and hence there could be nothing more than mere raids or forays, like those of the Bedouins of to-day; swift marches, ending in an attack or surprise,

¹ Deut. xvii. 8-12.

² 1 Sam. xvii. 17.

³ Jud. viii. 5. 1 Sam. xxv. 11.

followed by a dispersion of the force to their respective homes.

In such an utter disintegration of the community, no one, in ordinary times, could claim the chief authority, and each individual did "what was right in his own eyes."¹ Patriotism, in a large sense, could scarcely exist, where each village was entirely self-governing, and absorbed the interests of its population. It was only when oppression had become unendurable, that some spirit nobler than the crowd, raising a cry for united action against the enemy, was able to rouse his neighbourhood, or perhaps a large district, to common action, in which he, necessarily, was the leader. Such a hero was forthwith accepted as a "Judge," though he was rather a military leader; the peculiar title rising doubtless from the constant union of supreme judicial authority, in the East, with the highest power. But those only who pleased gathered round him, under the immediate leadership of their own chiefs of villages, clans, and tribes.² His power over such volunteers depended, moreover, on their pleasure or on his skill in the management of men. If victorious, he could speak as a master, but before the battle he could do little more than persuade.³ Even this authority, moreover, passed away with the public danger; for the momentary union of the people at large ceased when no longer necessary, and all, including the liberator himself, returned to their homes and their private affairs. The judge no longer ruled, because, except in times of war, there were no public interests to protect or advance. Yet he could hardly be said to sink into private life, for his fame commanded respect and guaranteed peace, and he was naturally consulted in cases of difficulty, as one whose wisdom or influence claimed recognition. But he

¹ Jud. xviii. 6.

² Jud. v. 2, 9.

³ Jud. i. 3; viii. 15-17.

had no defined authority and was only the first and most honoured citizen of the community.¹

In the early ages of the Hebrew settlement in Palestine the popular aversion to the authority of any one individual over the nation was universal and profound. So accustomed were they to simple patriarchal forms, that even Joshua, after the conquest and division of the land—notwithstanding the exceptional position he had held as their divinely appointed head—retired to his inheritance at Timnath-serah, appointing no successor to his dignities, and claiming no rank for his family, but spending his closing years in modest privacy, occupied only with his personal affairs. Henceforth, indeed, we find him claiming no higher authority over the tribes than to gather them together after the lapse of years,² when his end was approaching, to remind them of the benefits with which God had loaded them, and to induce them to renew their covenant with Him. Nor was this dislike to central authority easily overcome even by the experience of ages of trouble, caused by disunion and consequent weakness. When the tribes chose Saul as king, the hereditary Arab instincts were still so strong, that he himself saw at first no more in his new dignity, than that of chief of the army sent against Ammon, and took for granted, when the war was over, that he should return to his plough and his fields.³ During the first year of his reign, indeed, he was more a “Judge” than a king, for he had neither a permanent force, nor an administration, nor royal revenues, nor a capital, and exercised, in fact, no other functions than to defend the country against its enemies. It was long before he had a rude court, and the nucleus of his

¹ *Vigouroux*, vol. iii. pp. 47, 48.

² Josh. xxiii. 1, see p. 432.

³ 1 Sam. x. 26; xi. 5.

army was only slowly formed as the community passed, by imperceptible degrees, from patriarchal government to that of royalty. Nor do the exceptional cases of Jephthah and Gideon, in one of which power for life was demanded, and in the other offered, form any real contradiction to this characteristic.¹ Public opinion in the days of those heroes was slowly coming round to favour centralization, but still wavered till the days of Saul.

It must not be thought, moreover, that the Judges ruled over all the tribes, at least till the time of Eli and Samuel. Their office was strictly military, for their very name in Hebrew—Sofetim—means “saviours” or “liberators.” None of them, except Othniel, seems to have ruled over Judah and Simeon. Deborah is the heroine and prophetess only of the northern tribes. Gideon is the liberator of the centre of Palestine: Jephthah, of the districts beyond the Jordan, and Samson does not appear to have had authority over even his own tribe of Dan, but appears as Judge only in virtue of his personal exploits.²

To such a primitive condition of society, the calamities are, no doubt, to be attributed, which so often led to the rise of dictators, in the person of successive “Judges.” The tribes, which were too weak to resist oppression when they acted singly, would have been too strong to attack had they been united. But the long retention of their Arab fondness for patriarchal government was not without its wise purpose in the arrangements of Providence. Their religious development demanded isolation from their neighbours, and was secured, among other means, by their being placed in a country secluded from

¹ Jud. viii. 22; xi. 9.

² Jud. xv. 10–13. Ewald, *Gesch.*, vol. ii. pp. 515, 516.

the outer world by the desert on the south and east; by their forced restriction to the mountain districts, cut off from the Mediterranean by the rich maritime plains on the west; and by their being shut in on the north by the barrier of the Lebanon range. They were thus guarded, as far as possible, from intercourse with the heathen around them, and had only to blame their own supineness for isolated remains of idolatry having been left in their midst, through their failure in carrying out energetically the command of God to sweep the land clear of it, while the enthusiasm of their first attack was still at its height, and dread of them paralyzed resistance. But, not contented with even such care to protect them from corrupting influences, God had specially discountenanced their having a monarchy like that of the nations round;¹ He, Himself, promising to be their Strength and Deliverer, and even proclaiming Himself expressly their King.² Nothing could impress on them more vividly this dependence on Him, than their helplessness against their enemies when they forsook Him, and their repeated deliverance by instruments whom He raised up when they once more penitently sought His aid. It was, moreover, a great safeguard to them that they escaped the corrupting influence of a strong central power which, in all probability, would have favoured idolatry. Even when they at last adopted monarchy, their kings, as a rule, set the example of apostasy, for only three or four, out of more than forty who reigned over Judah or Israel, remained true to Jehovah, and the fashion thus set by a court naturally spread through the whole land. The isolation of patriarchal government, on the other hand,

¹ Exod. xv. 18; xviii. 19. Deut. xxxiii. 3. Jud. viii. 23. 1 Sam. viii. 7 ff.

² 1 Sam. x. 19; xii. 12.

limited religious defection to restricted areas, and made it possible for the people to recover themselves from it, again and again, by the healthy influence of neighbouring districts still true to the ancient faith.

The religion of the Canaanites was a terrible snare for a people whose fathers had lived amidst the pompous idolatry of the Nile, and who, themselves, had to learn, and act upon, the lofty doctrines of a spiritual religion wholly incomprehensible to the heathen world around them. To the simple mind of these early ages, the sublimity of the doctrines taught by Moses was so far in advance of current ideas, that it was dark by its very excess of light. It is difficult, moreover, to rise to any extent above the universal belief and modes of thought of an age, especially when they are based on the ignorant simplicity and moral obliquity from which idolatry has its rise. The system prevailing in Canaan was in reality only the worship of natural phenomena wrongly explained, and perverted to the sanction of the grossest impurity and cruelty. Yet it reigned over all Western Asia, in spite of its revolting characteristics, through the instinctive craving, common to all ages, for material and visible embodiments of religious ideas, and must have been terribly seductive to a people to whom these were rigidly denied. But above all, the contrast between the noble purity of the religion of Moses, and the license given to the sensual passions by that of Palestine, must have appealed with terrible force to all but the loftiest spirits. While we may blame Israel, therefore, for its repeated falls, the blame may well be mingled with pity.

The chief god of the Canaanites was Baal—the Sun, who was worshipped under different names. In one part he was Moloch, in another Chemosh, but his worship was everywhere alike fierce and cruel. His consort,

Astarte, or Ashtoreth, the Moon and the planet Venus, had abominations peculiar to her worship. But a detailed description of the local idolatry, as a whole, will be more appropriate hereafter. The influence it exerted on Israel was very hurtful even in the times of the Judges, though it seems chiefly to have affected those portions of the people who came into contact with the native population in their isolated communities here and there, or in their cities on the sea-coast. The bulk of the nation, living quietly in their upland valleys, and shut off from communication with strangers, appear rather to have fallen into neglect of religion than to have adopted that of their neighbours. The grand success of the reformation achieved by Samuel, and such glimpses of Hebrew life as are given in the Book of Ruth, seem to imply, that as a whole, there was always a latent religious life in the mass of the people, needing only to be roused and purified. It was not till the later days of the Kings that idolatry gained a strong footing in Israel at large. Through the whole time of the Judges it only required that the slumbering sensibility of the multitude should be appealed to in times of public excitement, to kindle the grandest zeal for Jehovah. So it was under Deborah, and Gideon, to mention no others, and so it continued for centuries later.

The want of a leader after Joshua's death, and the breaking up of the tribes into separate communities, naturally checked the career of conquest, for the strength of individual tribes was unequal to the lasting subjugation of the Canaanites in their respective bounds. Gradually, therefore, the sword was sheathed, and friendly relations sought with those whom they had been commissioned to drive out of the land. Nor were the Phenicians and other Canaanite peoples displeased with a condition of

things which left the caravan roads open for the commerce to which they were devoted. The conquerors were, in fact, being gradually conquered in their turn, by too close intimacy with their heathen neighbours. The language of the Hebrews was almost, if not quite, the same as theirs,¹ and there was not a little in some of their modes of thought and expression in religious matters that sounded very like those familiar in Israel. The Moabite stone speaks of Chemosh as "saving" the king "from all his enemies, and giving him his desire on all them that hated him."² He is said "to be angry with Moab," as Jehovah is spoken of as being "angry with Israel,"³ and national calamities are directly ascribed to this. He is described as commanding King Mesha to "go up against Israel," as Israel is required by Jehovah to "go up against the Canaanites."⁴ Baal and Astarte, in their multiplied local titles, would doubtless be regarded as only different presentations of the same God—"the Creator of the Universe." The very names given to children by Israelite and Canaanite mothers were often strangely alike. Both had Eleazar, "God has helped," and Nathanael, "God has given." If Jonathan meant "Jehovah has given," Baaljothan was its equivalent in the language of the country. The Hebrew name Haniel, "the favour of God," had its counterpart in Hannibal, "the favour of Baal." With so much in common, especially the use of the same language, it seems less strange that some of the Hebrews should so readily

¹ Thus Rahab speaks freely with the spies, and we never hear of any difficulty afterwards. The Hebrews had adopted "the language of Canaan," as long ago as Abraham's day, and had abandoned the use of their native Aramaic. See vol. i. p. 381.

² See Ps. liv. 7; lix. 10; xcii. 11.

³ 2 Kings xvii. 18.

⁴ Jud. i. 2.

have grafted the heathenism around on the worship of Jehovah, especially as the Levitical system was evidently much in abeyance for the first centuries after the conquest. Altars of Baal, or Ashtoreth, moreover, were numerous on every side—on the hill tops, and on artificial mounds; ¹ in groves on the hill slopes; under green trees elsewhere; in valleys; at the gates and market-places of the towns, and on the flat house-tops; ² while their temples adorned every considerable place. To minds alive to the lofty purity and spirituality of the Hebrew religion there might, indeed, be no danger of confounding it with the materialism and grossness of Canaanite idolatry. But when we remember how many, even in our own age, think they can reconcile a pantheistic confusion of God and nature, with a profession of Christianity, it is less to be wondered at that the ignorant and simple of such a remote age—married as many of them were to Canaanite wives devoted to Ashtoreth—should have made a fatal compromise between the worship of Baal, the Sun-god, the “Lord of all,” and Jehovah. Their fathers had accepted even so gross a symbol of the true God, as the golden calf.

The craving for quiet to enjoy the rich inheritance on which they had entered, must, also, have tended greatly to lower the tone of feeling in Israel. The long wilderness life gave an unspeakable relish to the comforts of a settled home; especially in a community that had so entirely abandoned the Arab tastes of their fathers in this respect, that even after forty years in the desert they were eager to have fixed abodes instead of moving tents. This selfish love of ease, indeed, often left neighbouring tribes unaided in their struggle with native or foreign enemies. Familiar relations were cultivated with their

¹ 1 Kings xi. 7. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19. *Ewald*, vol. iii. p. 418.

² Deut. xii. 2. Jer. vii. 31; xi. 13; xxxii. 39.

neighbours, and intermarriages became common; Israelites taking Canaanite wives, and giving their daughters to Canaanite husbands.¹ Such mixed marriages doubtless were more frequent in the border districts, to which peace was vital; but what part had not native communities within its own bounds? Asher, Naphtali, Zebulon, and especially Issachar, living as it did on Esdraelon, almost as subjects of the Canaanites, may have been more exposed than some others to this danger; but Ephraim and Manasseh must have had constant intercourse with the Canaanites of the plain of Sharon; and the heathen Jebusites² held Jerusalem, in the territory of Benjamin. In Dan, we find Samson taking a Philistine wife; and in Judah, Absalom's general, Amasa, far later, was the son of an Ishmaelite and a Hebrew woman.³ David himself, indeed, married the daughter of Talmaï, the chief of Geshur, on the north-east of Bashan; and these must only have been illustrations of an ordinary rule. But in the tribes beyond the Jordan, with their exceptional preference of Arab tent-life, intermarriages with the daughters of Moab and Ammon were, doubtless, very common; related as these peoples were to them in blood. Levi appears to have kept itself purest, but even in it, Moses, himself, had set the example by marrying a Cushite wife, and it may be taken for granted that each of the tribes had among them numerous children of the foreign multitude who had come with their fathers from Egypt.

From intermarriage with the heathen to taking part in their idolatrous worship was only a step. The Canaanites had already holy places for sacrifice or pilgrimage, to

¹ Jud. iii. 6.

² Jebusites = Treaders under foot. *Lengerke*.

³ ■ Sam. xvii. 25. 1 Chron. ii. 17.

which were attached legends powerful in their influence over ignorant minds. Some of the hills and valleys on the bounds of Israel had long been held sacred. Mount Carmel had for ages been the seat of one oracle,¹ and Mount Tabor boasted another.² At the pool of Hennon was the famous temple of Baal Gad—the god of good fortune. Bethel, in Benjamin, was an ancient sanctuary and a place of pilgrimage.³ Possibly the aliens who had come up with Israel from Egypt may have favoured these places first; but, if so, they soon found many to follow them. Hence Jehovah-worship was merged, at least here and there, in the prevailing idolatry. “They served the idols (of the Canaanites). Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to Shedim (ox-gods),⁴ and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood.”⁵

The Sanctuary at Shiloh, where priests and Levites ministered, was remote from many of the tribes, and lay, besides, in the territory of Ephraim; a people disliked for their pride and selfishness. In the general anarchy of tribal division and patriarchal rule, private altars were erected by individuals. The Levites, who should have settled as the public teachers of religion in their own cities, were inadequately provided for, and had to wander whither they could for a living. The story of Micah illustrates the age in this and other particulars. His house stands on the ridge of the hills of Ephraim, and he has dedicated to Jehovah 1,100 shekels of silver, which

¹ Raumer, *Palästina*, p. 45.

² *Mövers*, vol. i. pp. 26, 671.

³ *Graetz*, vol. i. p. 101.

⁴ *Ges. Lex.* 8th edition. Baal is called the “heifer Baal” in Tobit i. 5.

⁵ Ps. cvi. 36–38.

he presently owns he has stolen, for the purpose, from his mother.¹ Both then concur in their appropriation to religious uses, such as their ideas dictate. The house becomes almost a castle,² and a chamber in it, called "a House of God," is set apart as a temple, in which are set up two silver images, one sculptured and one molten, clothed in a mask and the priestly mantle called an ephod, to resemble as nearly as possible the Oracle at Shiloh.³ No Levite being available, a son of the house is installed as priest, and this strange medley of heathenism and Jehovah-worship forthwith goes on with all sincerity. A wandering Levite, however, who proves to be a grandson of Moses,⁴ comes to Micah's house, from Bethlehem Judah, in search of employment, and is appointed priest for the poor reward of ten silver shekels a year and a suit of clothes.

But, ere long, the tribe of Dan, feeling themselves

¹ Köhler thinks that the images were made with 200 shekels of the stolen money, devoted to Jehovah on her son restoring the 1,100, and confessing his theft. *Lehrbuch*, vol. ii. p. 56.

² The word for "gate," Jud. xviii. 16, is never used of that of a house—always of that of the enclosing wall of a town or fortress.

³ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 295. Of the two images one, apparently as large as a man was called *Teraphim*,* from its mask, and *Ephod*, from its mantle. Such images were used as Oracles (Zech. x. 2), and as appurtenances of public worship (Hos. iii. 4); but the custom was finally put down by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 24). See Ewald's *Alterthümer*, pp. 256-8.

⁴ Jud. xviii. 30. The name Moses has been changed by the Rabbis to Manasseh, to hide the fact that a grandson of their great legislator had fallen so low. In the Hebrew text the word translated Manasseh is written M^NSH. Without the N inserted above by the Rabbis it reads Moses. The Vulgate has Moses. The Sept., Manasses—thanks to its authors being Jews.

* The plural *Teraphim* is translated "an image" in 1 Sam. xix. 3, 16. The singular is never used in Scripture.

cramped up in too narrow bounds, send off five men in search of new settlements, and these, as they pass Micah's house, and lodge in the caravanserai at hand, are arrested by the sound of a well known-voice. Asking him "Who brought him hither? and how much he made in this place? and what he had to do here?" he tells them his strange story, and how Micah feels sure that Jehovah will now do him good when he has a Levite for priest. They learn also about the sacred images he has in his care, and presently pass on.

Returning the same way, however, some time after, as the guides of six hundred of their clansmen towards the north, they bring them to Micah's house. They, too, would like to have the Levite as their priest, and the precious images would be of priceless value, as a protection in their new homes. They determine therefore to rob Micah of his treasures, and to induce the Levite to join their fortunes. His house was at Micah's gateway, and there the six hundred gather, talking with their old neighbour, while the five men steal into Micah's sacred chamber, and having brought out both the images and the teraphim and ephod, are far off with them, in company with the Levite and their six hundred brethren, before the loss is discovered. Their new ecclesiastic had indeed some faint scruples about going with them, but these quickly yielded before a promise that he should be priest, not of a single house, but to a whole tribe and family in Israel.¹

Thus, in the years following Joshua's death, the ministers of religion were both poor and strangely scattered over the land; no general system of public worship had been set up, and the gravest corruptions had already taken root. It is not therefore surprising that the hill

¹ Jud. xviii. 14-19.

tops were soon marked by altars, alongside which the sharp pointed stone symbols of Baal were raised. Some in the northern tribes worshipped the Phenician or Syrian Baal and Astarte; and many beyond the Jordan gave themselves up to honour Chemosh and Moloch, the gods of Moab and Ammon. In the more southern parts, bordering on the Maritime Plain, Dagon, the god of the Philistines, had many adherents; and everywhere house gods, under the old name of teraphim, were consulted as oracles, as in the case of Micah's Levite. Jehovah was still acknowledged, but He, also, was represented by an image. A wild confusion of ideas, in fact, prevailed, in keeping with an age when everything was unsettled, and lawlessness in common life reacted in every direction. Old modes of thought, still surviving from the days of Egypt, or revived by contact with the idolatry around, mixed themselves up with the new and lofty conceptions learned from Moses—their incompatibility not having yet been realized. So heathen in their feelings, indeed, did many become, as often, like the Canaanites, to name their children after the idols. Thus a son of Saul,¹ was known as Ishbaal—"the man of Baal"; while two of his sons and one of his grandsons have names ending in Bosheth—"shame," a word used by the Jews as a contemptuous substitute for Ashtoreth.²

In these wild times, however, the recollection of the wonderful story of the Exodus, Sinai, and the wilderness, still lingered in many minds, and kept them true to Jehovah. Indeed, if the inscription on the famous Samaritan Pentateuch, not the only similar one existing,

¹ 1 Chron. ix. 39. Jerubbaal, the name taken by Gideon, means, like Meribbaal, the son of Jonathan (1 Chron. ix. 40), "a contender against Baal."

² Kalisch.

be genuine, some faithful souls still honoured the "Law" by diligently transcribing it for wider use. On the back of that ancient MS. one reads with awe the words: "I, Abishuah, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, the favour of Jehovah be on them—for His glory I have written this holy Torah (copy of the Law), in the entrance of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, on Mount Gerizim, even Bethel, in the thirteenth year of the possession by the children of Israel of the land of Canaan and all its boundaries. I thank the Lord."¹ Another Samaritan MS. has, at the end of Genesis, the following note, which is equally startling: "This holy Torah has been made by a wise, valiant, and great son, a good, a beloved, and an understanding leader, a master of all knowledge, by Shelomo, son of Saba, a valiant man, leader of the congregation by his knowledge and his understanding; and he was a righteous man, an interpreter of the Torah, a father of blessings—of the sons of Nun—may the Lord be merciful to them!—and it was appointed to be dedicated holy to the Lord, that they might read therein with fear and prayer in the House of the High priesthood—in the seventh month, the tenth day; and this was done before me, and I am Ithamar, son of Aaron, son of Ithamar the High Priest: may the Lord renew his strength! Amen."² Nor could there have been wanting those who recalled to the multitude the glorious past, and reproved the degradation into which some of their brethren had fallen. Among the Levites who guarded the Tabernacle and the Ark at Shiloh, some, no doubt, lifted their voices against

¹ *Tent Work*, p. 26. The Rev. M. Löwy recently made this entry the subject of a paper read before the Society of Biblical Archaeology.

² *Tent Work*, p. 27.

the evil around them. Such a "messenger of God"¹ we find living at Gilgal, and making his appearance at an assembly of the people at Bethel, reproaching them for having forsaken their covenant with Jehovah, and for having made one with idols; and tracing to this unfaithfulness all the calamities they were suffering at the hands of the Canaanites.² Nor was it without significance that enough sensibility still remained in those who heard him, to melt them to tears at such words. But, unhappily, their sorrow was only passing.

In Shiloh itself, the religious centre of the tribes, there seems to have been no more provision for the moral instruction of the nation, than amongst the scattered Levites. Sacrifices were offered to Jehovah as, in the Canaanite towns, to Baal or Astarte; but we have no indications that the priest's lips kept knowledge, or that they sought teaching at His mouth.³ The Ark, with its priceless treasure of the two Tables, was regarded rather as a defence against the enemy in the field, than as a source of instruction. After the harvest, at the time of the gathering of the grapes, the people were wont, in larger or smaller numbers, to assemble at the Tabernacle with their wives and children,⁴ at a yearly feast or Haj. The fathers brought an offering; after presenting part of which on the altar, the priest got his portion, and the rest served for a feast in the family circle. Dances followed among the vineyards round, but there is no trace of any loftier religious service.

¹ The *Speaker's Comm.* reads, "The Angel of Jehovah," but Bertheau and De Wette translate it as above; so do Zunz, Ewald and Paulus Cassel. That the inhabitants of Canaan were not to be driven out before them, because of their sins, is the ground of their sorrow.

² Jud. ii. 1 ff. ³ Mal. ii. 7. ⁴ Jud. xxi. 19. 1 Sam. i. 3.

This gloomy time lasted through generations; for, from the death of Joshua to the election of Saul, was a period of over 400 years.¹ With warlike neighbours round them, eager to reconquer so fair a land, it could not fail to bring frequent peril and even disaster. Again and again, whole districts were attacked, spoiled, and even reduced to helpless submission—their brethren quietly looking on, intent only on their own interests. But such trouble ultimately served its end as a wholesome discipline, recalling the sufferers to their ancient faith, which thus, in the end, became fixed in the national heart. When the need was greatest, men always moreover rose, in the providence of God, who by heroic devotion, delivered the section of their brethren oppressed for the time, and indicated God's faithfulness to the race. These were the Judges or "Saviours" of Israel.

¹ The exact time is fixed variously by different authorities—some thinking it 480 years, others 420, and so on, but all agree that it was over 400 years long.





CHAPTER XV.

THE JUDGES.

THE religious enthusiasm in Israel, kindled by Moses during the wilderness life, and intensified by the incidents of the conquest, survived, in a measure, during the remaining years of Joshua and even of the elders who survived him, and "had known all the works of Jehovah that He had done for the nation," through its second great leader. Gradually, however, as the generation passed away that had seen the great deeds of these first days, and the miraculous help God had vouchsafed Israel, lower influences came into play, and the high tone of the past was forgotten. Eleazar the high priest, the son of Aaron, and his successor, had died about the same time as Joshua,¹ and was buried, as it would seem, about four miles outside the valley of Shechem, on the spur of one of the hills of Ephraim, known as the hill of Phinehas;² the name of the illus-

¹ So says Josephus, *Ant.*, V. i. 29. In the entrance of Eleazar to the Holy Land we have, in addition to Joshua and Caleb, a third person of the generation of the Exodus, who crossed the Jordan. Perhaps he was spared as the high priest; or are the words respecting that generation dying in the wilderness to be taken in a general, not a literal sense?

² Lieut. Conder identifies the "hill of Phinehas as the spot on which the present village Awertah stands, in the plain outside the

trious son having taken the place of that of his father. Consecrated as third high priest, and according to the Rabbis, the son¹ of a Midianite mother,² he became, in a measure, the successor of Joshua. Full of fiery zeal, and sternly uncompromising in his devotion to Jehovah, he had already in his youth signalized himself by the act which put a close to the licentious outburst at Baal-peor, and stopped the plague then destroying the camp. Henceforward, he became a noted and foremost man in Israel, especially as the heir to the high priesthood, and from the special commendation vouchsafed him by Jehovah.³ As much soldier as priest, it was he who led the avenging host against Midian, taking with him the sacred Ark.⁴ Though in a nominally inferior position till his father's death, it is, nevertheless, he, rather than Eleazar, who seems to have been the moving spirit in the maintenance of the old valley of Shechem, on the east side of the chain of hills of which Ebal and Gerizim are a part. The tomb of Eleazar is 'a rude structure of masonry in a court open to the air.' It is eighteen feet long, plastered all over, and shaded by a splendid terebinth. That of Phinehas is apparently an older building, and the walls of its court have an arcade of round arches, now supporting a trellis, covered with a grape vine, and the floor is paved." *Tent Work*, p. 41.

¹ Dean Stanley speaks of the name Phinehas as Egyptian, and as the last trace of the sojourn of Israel on the Nile; but Fürst, Gesenius, Riehm, and Schenkel, derive it from the Hebrew, and explain it as meaning "Oracle Mouth" or "Brass Mouth."

² Wagenseil's *Sota*, vol. viii. p. 6.

³ God promised that the high priesthood should continue in his family, and this was literally fulfilled. It was interrupted, indeed, when Eli, of the race of Ithamar, was priest, but the line of Phinehas resumed the dignity in the person of Zadok, Solomon's high priest, and continued to hold it till the fall of Jerusalem. 1 Chron. xvi. 39, 40.

⁴ Num. xxxi. 6.

religious fervour and strictness during the ever darkening times. Thus we see him the commander of the Levite guard of the Tabernacle and camp, and, when the Benjamites had committed an act of atrocious immorality, it was he who gave the command to prosecute the war against them which ended in their being almost exterminated.¹ At an earlier time, when the Reubenites had built a huge altar on some height on the western edge of the Jordan,² it was Phinehas who headed the deputation to remonstrate with them, and only their earnest deprecation of any design to forsake Jehovah, kept him from making it the occasion of the first great civil war.³ "So great was his courage," says Josephus, "and so remarkable his bodily strength, that he would never relinquish any undertaking, however difficult or dangerous, without gaining a complete victory."⁴

After a time, however, he died, and with him the age of stern fidelity to the national covenant with Jehovah seems to have come to a close. Weary with years of struggle; satisfied with what they had acquired; tempted to seek friendship with the Canaanites by the similarity of language, the opportunities of profit, the seductions of neighbourhood, by their own want of military science, and by the weakness of tribal division; their warlike feelings gave way to a desire for ease and quiet.

It was, indeed, humanly speaking, only what might have been expected. The Phenicians and other Canaanites could, doubtless, have been overwhelmed, had the tribes remained united under a competent leader,

¹ Jud. xx. 28.

² Josh. xxii. 10.

³ Josh. xxii. 10-34.

⁴ The mother of Phinehas was Putiel, a name remarkable as formed of the Egyptian word Puti or Poti, devoted to, and the Hebrew word El, God. *De Vogüé's Inscriptions Sémitiques*, p. 125.

and had the burning enthusiasm of the first attack been utilized to carry out the war to the uttermost. But the resignation of his high office, as Dictator, by Joshua, and the dispersion of the tribes to their respective territories, let the golden opportunity pass, never to return. The rush of invasion had already spent its force, and now the rods which could not even be bent when united, were easily broken in detail when apart.¹ The strength of the Phenicians was, in fact, out of proportion to that of Israel. In Joshua's days they still paid tribute to Egypt as they had done for 400 years before, enjoying in return a monopoly of the Egyptian trade, which they had developed with great energy. Their progress in the *Ægean* Sea had been arrested by the growing power of the Greeks and other races, but they still retained various islands, as the outposts of their foreign commerce. They had already reached Sicily, Malta, and the distant northern coast of Africa, and had everywhere planted trading factories, like those of the European nations in modern times in India; and these colonies may very probably have been strengthened by an extensive emigration from Palestine, to escape the terror of Joshua's sword.² But even these far-scattered settlements did not mark the limits of their commercial enterprises, for this was the time when, as Humboldt says, their flag waved at once in Britain and in the Indian Ocean.³

¹ God had from the first said that He would drive out the native populations by "little and little," and not "in one year," "lest the land become desolate and the beast of the field multiply against" Israel. *Exod.* xxiii. 30.

² See page 408. Maspero believes that the monumental inscription, recording the flight of Canaanites to Africa, was genuine. *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 292.

³ Wilkins, *Phenicia*, p. 45.

The vast wealth of Sidon and the other native towns must have been eagerly coveted by the Israelites, but it was beyond their reach. They could not stand up against the long spears of the lowland races, and dreaded their terrible iron chariots. Giving up the hope, therefore, ere long, of mastering the rich sea-coast, they kept to the hills; but, as the passes by which commerce flowed to Egypt, Arabia, Babylon, and Assyria, ran through these, the Phenicians were more than willing to live quietly with those who commanded them. Hence the Israelites were allowed to settle in their towns;¹ very likely with some conditions of dependence, though still living apart, and adhering, in the main, to their own laws and customs. The inland Canaanite populations, moreover, which survived Joshua's terrible onset, soon recovered from their depression, and became in turn the assailants. Their troubles had, in fact, regenerated the remnant of the nation, and kindled a desperate resolution, before which the Hebrews, very soon, quailed. Even the usually unwarlike Sidonians indeed, after a time overcame and oppressed them, selling them abroad as slaves, and treating them at home as serfs,² till "the soul of the Lord was grieved for their misery."

The first cry of distress, however, rose not through the fresh vigour of the Canaanites, but was extorted by an invader from the far banks of the Euphrates. The decay of national life and religion had gradually become extreme. Living contentedly among the remnants of the heathen races, the Hebrews freely intermarried with them, and, as the result, too often worshipped Baal and Ashtoreth as well as Jehovah. But it is for ever true that the character of a nation's religion is an index to its

¹ Jud. i. 27-36.

² Jud. x. 16. See also Mövers, *Die Phönizier*, vol. ii. pp. 302-315.

national health and vigour, and little of either could survive the moral degeneracy into which they had fallen. Under these circumstances a king, unrecognized as yet in the Assyrian records, made his appearance, and compelled some of the tribes to pay him tribute for eight years. At last, however, trouble had its fitting result, in leading the sufferers back to the God of their fathers, who had done such great things for them while they honoured His covenant; and the religious revival soon brought deliverance. Othniel, "the lion of God," the younger brother or nephew of the heroic Caleb, headed a general rising, which drove the oppressor from the district he held, and secured its quiet for forty years, till Othniel's death. He is the only Judge mentioned as connected with the tribe of Judah.

The next of the isolated notices of these times brings before us a new enemy. The king of Moab—Eglon, "the bullock," perhaps a name of contempt given him by Israel,—uniting his bands with those of a related people, the Ammonites, and with the Amalekites, the old enemies of Israel, was able to overpower Benjamin, doubtless after a bitter struggle, and take the town of Jericho,¹ which was in the tribe, and had apparently been rebuilt in some measure, perhaps on another site.² Eighteen years of tribute and oppression followed, but a deliverer at last rose, in the person of Ehud, a Benjamite, a young man,³ but already held in high estimation by his people, and, apparently, a prophet.⁴ Chosen to superintend the payment at Jericho of the tribute of his brethren, he prepared himself for a far different errand

¹ Graetz thinks it was Zoar, but most understand it as Jericho.

² Jud. iii. 13. Conder says the site of the later city was not the same as that of the earlier, owing, no doubt, to Joshua's curse.

³ *Septuagint*.

⁴ Jud. iii. 20.

by binding a dagger, sixteen inches long,¹ on his right thigh, under the mantle or abba, which his position entitled him to wear. The tribute, which was doubtless in kind, having been delivered to the king in person, and an opportunity thus afforded of noticing details of his house, its approaches, and its internal arrangements, he left, and dismissed the tribute-bearers to their homes. But, instead of climbing the mountain pass with them, he went off to the graven images,² which already had been set up at Gilgal, and having thus let sufficient time elapse, returned alone to Eglon, announcing that he had a secret message for him. Falling into the snare, the king forthwith ordered silence; an intimation that all should withdraw. He was at the time in his summer apartment, raised on the roof for coolness, and eagerly listened for Ehud's communication. But the wily Benjamite wished to be sure of his prey, and now further hinted that his message was from God. At this intimation, Eglon rose, perhaps from reverence for what was from above; perhaps to defend himself, in alarm at the mention of a message from the God of the Hebrews, which only could be hostile to him. In an instant, while he thus exposed himself to the blow, Ehud, a left-handed man, like many of his tribe, snatched the dagger from under his cloak, and buried it to the hilt in Eglon's

¹ The text (Jud. iii. 16) says, "a cubit" and this Lieut. Conder seems to prove so demonstratively to have been sixteen inches. To avoid fractional parts, however, the usual estimate of 18 inches is adopted, except where stated. See *Tent Work*, p. 187.

² The word translated "quarries," Jud. iii. 19, 26, is *Pesillim*, which is rendered in the other forty-nine places in which it is used, "graven" or "carved images," and only in this incident "quarries." The special rendering here adopted is that of the Targum.

body. Passing instantly through the anteroom,¹ and into the porch, he locked the doors, and quietly left, without exciting suspicion. Nor was it until some time after that the king's fate was known; his servants refraining from forcing the doors lest he might wish privacy. Meanwhile, Ehud had escaped beyond the images at Gilgal, to the woody slopes of Seirath,² in the south part of the hill country of Ephraim, bordering on Benjamin, and there, from spot to spot, blew with his trumpet—perhaps a long horn—the well-known war summons, gathering a multitude behind him, armed as they were able on the moment. With these he forthwith rushed down the passes to the fords of the Jordan, to prevent the escape of the enemy to Moab. Ten thousand men, all reputable, and all men of valour, fell before this bold stroke, and Moab was driven from the land, which thenceforward enjoyed a rest of eighty years, at least in this part. But the memory of these dark days remained long after, in the name of the Benjamite village Chephar-ha-ammonai, “the hamlet of the Ammonites,”³ and perhaps in that of Michmash, which some think derived from Chemosh, the Moabite god.

The invasion under Eglon had been on the south-east, but the next recorded was from the opposite side of Palestine, where the Philistines, on the Maritime Plain, had already begun the raids into the Hebrew uplands, which were afterwards to become so terrible. To resist them, one Shamgar, otherwise unknown, appeared at the head of a rising, perhaps in Dan and Benjamin, in which he drove back and ultimately cut off and slew, a foraging party of six hundred men, who had

¹ This is the true meaning of the last clause of Jud. iii. 22.

² Seirath means “overgrown with bushes or woods.”

³ Josh. xviii. 24.

come up from the plains to rob and plunder. This could not, however, have been the first of such inroads, for the Israelites had already been so thoroughly disarmed, that Shamgar's only weapon was the long and heavy ironshod ox-goad still in use in Palestine;¹ which, however, was formidable in the hands of a strong man. But an isolated effort like this was inadequate to secure the freedom of the district, for we find the country at large still harried and oppressed until after Deborah's victory.²

It is difficult to put together or make a connected narrative of the incidents briefly recorded in the Book of Judges. Hence, the quiet mentioned as following the deliverance of Benjamin and Southern Ephraim from Moab may refer to those parts only, rather than to the country at large, especially as the notice of Shamgar immediately follows. In any case, however, a long interval of peace gave breathing time to the tribes as a whole, and tended in many ways to their advancement. The chief men rode in state on white asses;³ the rich sat on costly saddles or carpets. Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, had vast flocks on the east of the Jordan.⁴ Dan mingled with the Philistines of Joppa, and busied itself with their sea-faring pursuits. Asher, in the

¹ "In ploughing they use goads of an extraordinary size. Upon measuring of several, I found them about eight feet long and at the bigger end six inches in circumference. They were armed at the lesser end with a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end with a small spade, or paddle, of iron, strong and massy, for cleansing the plough from the clay that encumbers it in working." *Maundrell's Journey*, p. 149 (date April 15, 1696). The *Sept.* has "ploughshare" for "ox-goad." Jud. iii. 31.

² Jud. v. 7.

³ Jud. v. 10. "Sit in judgment," sit on carpets, or saddles.

⁴ Jud. v. 16.

north, took in the same way to the busy sea-shore, which they nominally owned from the Bay of Acre to Tyre.¹ There was rich plunder of coloured robes, and embroidered needlework² to be torn from the necks of the daughters of Israel, or secured in the sack of her towns, when the enemy came into the land. Commerce, moreover, had increased, so that the caravan routes in the valleys or plains were much in use,³ and thus the tribes were growing richer and stronger each year.

But the religious revival which had roused Benjamin against Moab, like others before it, gradually died away, and the northern tribes especially had turned again, more or less, to the worship of Baal, until at last, about a hundred and sixty years after Joshua's death,⁴ Jehovah once more let loose their enemies on them, to drive them back to Himself by the stern discipline of foreign oppression and tyranny. The petty kingdom of Hazor, which Joshua had overrun, a century and a half before, had recovered itself, and a successor to the Jabin of that day, bearing the same name, reigned in the town, which had been rebuilt. Strengthening himself by a force of chariots, which he gradually increased to nine hundred,⁵

¹ Jud. v. 17 (Graetz), "abode in his breaches" = at his creeks.

² Jud. v. 30.

³ Jud. v. 6.

⁴ Köhler's *Lehrbuch*, vol. ii. p. 48.

⁵ Rameses II., in the poem of Pentaur, asserts that the Hittites, in a battle at Esdraelon, had 2,500 chariots of war, at the time of the Oppression of Israel in Egypt; and the Egyptian monuments record that Rameses III. captured in the same plain 994 Canaanite chariots. Thothmes III., long before, after his victory on this field also, took no fewer than 2,041 horses, and 924 chariots. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 204. Chabas, *Études* p. 434. Cavalry, in our sense, was not used (*Ibid.* p. 437). Ash-toreth was the patroness of war chariots. Naville, *Mythe d'Horus*,

he was able at last to overpower the Israelites of the north, and to keep them in painful subjection for twenty years. Strong fortresses held by him or his allies at Taanach, Megiddo, and Bethshean, on the south of Esdraelon, effectually cut off help from the southern tribes, and reduced those in the north to great distress. All trade or even movement over the country ceased; the people hid themselves in the upland valleys, or behind the strong walls of their towns; the elders of the villages and of the tribes were alike dispirited and helpless, and no one ventured to attempt resistance.¹ Men were glad to hurry on their necessary errands by secret mountain paths, and the open roads were deserted.² The population were, in fact, cowed and paralyzed; for against the overwhelming force of the Canaanites they could at best present only an almost unarmed multitude, among whom an ox-goad was the welcome substitute for a sword, and who could hardly boast of a spear or shield among 40,000 men.³

In this emergency it was to a woman—when all men were afraid—that deliverance was due. An early Joan of Arc, fired like her distant successor, alike with a grand patriotism and a lofty religious enthusiasm, had pondered the miseries of her brethren, till her heroic soul burst into a flame of zeal for the overthrow of their oppressor, and of indignation at the cowardice of her people, who dared not strike for liberty. It was no case of narrow

p. 13. Some Canaanite chariots, on the Egyptian monuments, are drawn by oxen, and I have seen oxen trained to run very fast; but the chariots taken by Joshua were drawn by horses (chap. ii. 6). The Canaanite chariots had not scythes or knives at their sides as has been supposed. See p. 385.

¹ Jud. v. 7. "The inhabitants" etc., should be "the rulers."

² Jud. v. 6.

³ Jud. v. 8.

tribal loyalty, for she lived in the south, in the hills of Ephraim, between Ramah and Bethel, on the central thoroughfare of Palestine, a position to which, perhaps, she owed her knowledge of the evil plight of the northern tribes.¹

Deborah, "the Bee," with all her enthusiasm, was no ascetic, but, in keeping with the aversion of her race to a single life, was the wife of one Lapidoth—"the Torches"—of whom we know nothing more. Born with the grand gift of genius, she could embody her high thoughts in the rythmical verse in which her countrymen delighted. Her songs flew far and wide, rousing a national spirit in the dispirited and demoralized tribes—painting, no doubt, the glories of the past, and the mighty deeds God had wrought for them by the hands of leaders He had raised among them, and it may be taunting them with their degeneracy in submitting to be slaves. So great was her fame for wisdom, that she became the centre of moral and even judicial power over an ever-widening district. Seated, for the sake of its shade, under a palm-tree,² which afterwards bore her name, and could not have been far from another at Baal Tamar—Baal of the Palm,³ if it was not identical with it,⁴ "the children of Israel came up to her for judg-

¹ Ewald supposes she belonged to Issachar; Hitzig that she belonged to Naphtali, but Köhler, with justice, rejects these ideas as arbitrary, and thinks she belonged to Benjamin or Ephraim.

² "Thousands of palms still wave their noble heads dreamily in the air in almost all parts of the land, especially on the sea, coast from Gaza to Beirût. Even in the high-lying Jerusalem they grow in the open air, and in the neighbourhood of Nazareth I discovered a whole grove of them." Furrer, in Schenkel's *Lex.*, vol. i. p. 580.

³ Jud. xx. 33.

⁴ Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 146

ment." Thus aided, the impulse of her great soul was naturally contagious, till the whole land, from Benjamin to the far north of Naphtali, was moved with a common aspiration for national freedom, and a resolute determination to obtain it. New chiefs, doubtless men of vigour, were appointed,¹ to supersede for a time the local elders, and secret preparations everywhere made for a rising. A leader of the whole movement was, however, still needed, and Deborah chose one from the scene of the deepest oppression. On the shores of the Lake of Galilee, south of where Tiberias now stands, in a place called Kedesh, apparently an ancient holy place of the Canaanites, lived the chief on whom she had fixed—Barak, or Barca—"the thunderbolt," an Israelite in his heart, though the spirit of the times had given him a Phenician name.² He must already have gained reputation, to be known so far off as the confines of Benjamin. Him Deborah summoned to her in the south,³ and commanded, in the name of Jehovah, as whose prophetess she spoke, to march to Mount Tabor on the plain of Esdraelon, with 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun; promising that God would draw to him Sisera, Jabin's commander, with his chariots and his host, and deliver them into his hands. But Barak was apparently less resolute and heroic than Deborah. "He did not know," he said, "the propitious day on which the Lord would send forth His angel before him to give him the

¹ Jud. v. 8. ² The family name of Hannibal was Barca.

³ Dean Stanley, writing before the results of the Palestine Survey were known, thinks Kadesh Naphtali the place—a spot in the far north, close to Jabin's town, Hazor, in the mountains of Naphtali—on a hill overlooking a green and well watered valley. I cannot, however, but think Conder is right in the identification he has made, which I have adopted above.

victory;"¹ she, herself, must come, to let him be sure of it, else he would not undertake the task. He could not trust the promise of God, which must be fulfilled whether Deborah went with him or not. But if he hesitated, she knew no fear. Go with him? Assuredly she would. "But," added she, "my going will take away your glory, for the victory will be called mine, not yours." Making her way north with him, therefore, to Kedesh, the two finally organized the revolt. Messages sent far and near, were answered by 10,000 men gathering from the two tribes, at the rendezvous at Tabor. Issachar, from the very plain of Esdraelon, for once broke away from its servitude, and sent bands of volunteers. Ephraimites gathered from their hills, the old home of Amalek,² the fiercest enemy of Israel, and, following them, came valiant crowds from Benjamin—the most warlike of the tribes—men skilled in the bow, and so famous with the sling as to be reputed to throw stones to a hairbreadth and not miss;³ able, moreover, to use either their right or left hand with equal skill and strength. Both parts of Manasseh, also, east and west of the Jordan, rallied to the struggle, sending their chiefs as well as men.⁴ It was the first time since the conquest that the national spirit had been roused to such a pitch or the tribes brought to act together to such an extent. But the absent were as conspicuous as those who answered the appeal. The people of Meroz, a town seemingly at the head of the pass to Bethshean, at the east end of the plain, might have done good service, but refused to come to the help of Jehovah, amongst the mighty men sent forth by their brethren, and drew down

¹ *Septuagint.*

² See p. 479.

³ Jud. xx. 16. 1 Chron. viii. 40; xii. 2. 2 Chron. xvii. 17.

⁴ Jud. v. 14.

on them a curse which apparently was carried out by their extermination, and the utter demolition of their homes.¹ By the brooks of Reuben there were great discussions, but it ended in its clans leaving their brethren to struggle unaided, while they themselves stayed among their sheepfolds, to pipe to their flocks.² Gad, also, refused to come; Dan would not leave its boats at Joppa; and Asher stayed, with craven indifference, in the creeks and bays of Acre. Of the great tribe of Judah, or of Simeon, nothing is said. Jealousy of Ephraim probably kept them aloof. To Zebulun, which had been busiest enrolling volunteers,³ was to be given the palm in the approaching battle, as the people that jeopardized their lives to death; Naphtali, dwelling in the hills,⁴ earning also an illustrious name.

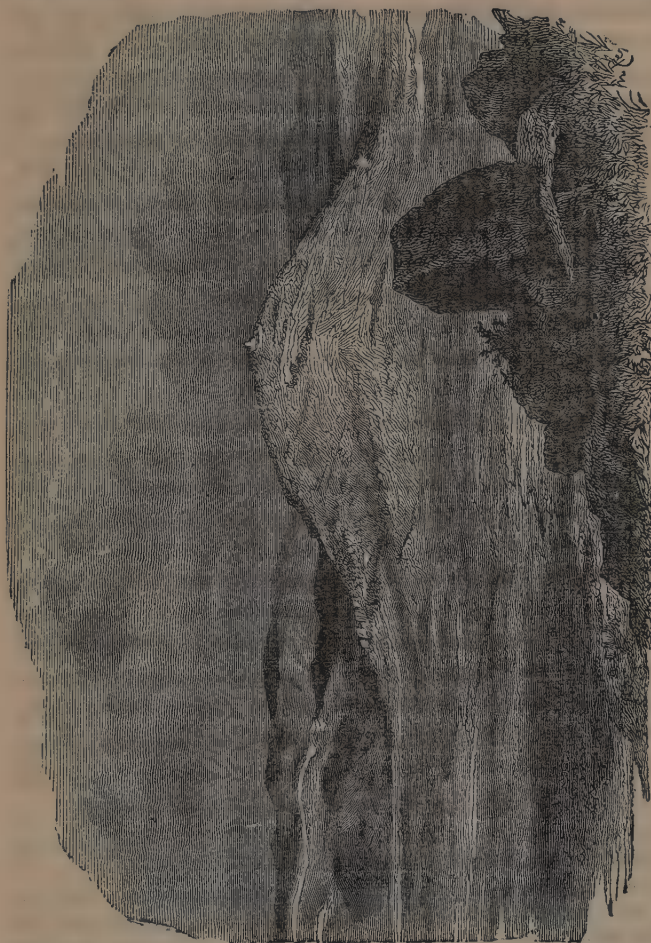
Tabor, a mountain rising 1,500 feet above the plain of Esdraelon at its north-east end, is steep on the north, but bare and shapeless on the south, and stands isolated, except on the west, where a narrow ridge connects it with the hills of Nazareth. It is still covered with oaks, pistacias, and other trees and undergrowth, in which the fallow deer finds a home, but its top is treeless, and forms a comparatively level circuit of half an hour's walk, commanding wide views of the plain from end to end.⁵ No spot could have been better chosen for the rendezvous of Israel, for it could not be attacked by the chariots of the Canaanites, and its summit,⁶ afforded a lofty watch-tower from which Deborah and Barak could see all their movements.

¹ Jud. v. 23. ² Jud. v. 15, 16. ³ Jud. v. 14. ⁴ Jud. v. 18.

⁵ A village on the slopes of Tabor still bears the name of Deborah. For the description, see *Tent Work*, p. 69. Munk's *Palästina*, Leipzig, 1871, vol. i. p. 8.

⁶ *The Great Map of Palestine Survey*, Sheet VI., gives the height as 1,850 feet above the sea.

News of the gathering of the tribes had been con-



TABOR, FROM THE SUMMIT OF JEBEL DUHY. Lieut. Conder, R.E.
By permission of the Committee of the Palestine Fund.

veyed to Sisera, the commander of the forces of Jabin and his allies, by the Kenites of Zaanaim—a spot still

bearing the same name, on the plateau over the Sea of Galilee, east of Tabor¹—an Arab tribe which, though for the time on terms of peace with Jabin, had always been friendly with Israel, from the remembrance of the marriage of Moses to the daughter of its sheik Jethro. A part of it had remained in the wilderness south of Judah, but another branch had moved north and pitched its tents, for the time, under the terebinths of Zaanaim—the place of “wanderings.” With Arab duplicity they now betrayed Israel, as their chief’s wife was presently to betray its arch enemy.²

The commander of the Canaanite army bore the title of Sisera—“the Leader,”—and appears to have been the vassal king of Harosheth, so called from the beautiful woods above the Kishon.³ It was then, no doubt, a strong fortress, overlooking the country which its lord had subdued; but is now a miserable village, at the point where, through a narrow gorge, the stream, hidden amongst oleander bushes, enters the plain of Acre.⁴ Collecting his forces in Esdraelon—the only open space in northern Palestine where chariots had favourable ground for their manœuvres, he made his headquarters at Taanach, a Canaanite town and fortress at the south-west of the plain, on a long spur of the Carmel range, now clad with olive-trees, and marked by a stone village still called Taanak. Tabor rose at a distance of about

¹ Jud. iv. 11. See also *Tent Work*, p. 69. ² Jud. iv. 12.

³ *Kneucker* thinks it means “the guard of the land,” others translate it “the clearings,” or “the quarries.”

⁴ The *Tell* or mound of Harosheth is of great size and double, and is situated just below the point where the Kishon in one of its turns beats against the rocky base of Carmel, leaving no room even for a footpath. A castle standing there would effectually command the pass up the valley of the Kishon into Esdraelon. Thomson’s *Land and Book*, p. 436.

sixteen miles to the north-east ; its top just visible above the hills of Little Hermon,¹ dotted with the two villages, Endor and Nain, and forming the underside of a recess in the great plain, at the head of which Tabor stands. The whole surface of Esdraelon is seamed with dry watercourses, which receive the drainage of the hills from all sides, and swell into torrents after storms. These unite in the north-west, into one channel, known in the days of Sisera as the Kishon—or “winding”—which pours through a deep tortuous bed about 15 feet deep and 15 to 20 yards wide, into the Bay of Acre.² The most dangerous part in its course, however, is close to Tabor, where the springs from which it rises form a chain of pools and brooks, fringed with reeds and rushes, and speedily turned into a wide and treacherous quagmire after rain. Here, “at Endor,”³ Sisera’s host was doomed to be mired and to perish.⁴

The plain of Esdraelon has in all ages been the battle-field of Palestine. Here fought Thothmes III., Rameses II., and Rameses III. ; here Pharaoh Necho won that sad battle of Megiddo, in which king Josiah was slain, amidst a slaughter so terrible that the great conflict of the Apocalypse is called, from it, the battle of Armageddon—“the hill of Megiddo.”⁵ Here have fought in turn the armies of Assyria, of the Crusaders and of Bonaparte,

¹ Height 1,600 feet. *Great Map of Palestine Survey*, Sheet IX.

² Porter’s *Handbook*, pp. 383–4.

³ Ps. lxxxiii. 10.

⁴ *Tent Work*, p. 69.

⁵ The site of Megiddo seems to have been identified by Lieut. Conder in Migedda, at the foot of Gilboa—a mound, from which five springs, “the Waters of Megiddo,” burst forth. *Tent Work*, p. 232. The position hitherto assigned it, close to Legio, is therefore, apparently, incorrect.

and it was on the mountains of Gilboa, at its east end, that Saul and Jonathan perished.

The signal for attack was given by Deborah. "Up," cried she to Barak, "This, this, and no other is the day,"¹ and, forthwith, the ill-armed host of Hebrew footmen bravely poured down from their mountain security to rush on the chariots of the enemy, drawn up below, in the open plain. The day lowered as they moved off, and, at last, as the two ill-matched forces met, a terrible storm of sleet and hail from the east, burst over the plain, on the backs of the Hebrews and in the faces of the Canaanites. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera": and as "the rains descended," "the winds blew," and "the flood came" and "beat vehemently" against his host, turning the deep red soil into a quagmire in which his chariots could not move, and filling the dry watercourses with rushing torrents in which many of them were overwhelmed. So great indeed was the carnage, that centuries after, a Psalmist speaks of the dead as manuring the ground.² The day was hopelessly lost to the Canaanites, and nothing remained but to try to escape with life. Leaving his chariot, Sisera fled on foot to the north-east, under the slopes of Tabor, across the great lava plateau, on which stood, near the modern Bessum,³ the black tents of Heber the Kenite, his master's ally, where he might hope for temporary refuge.

The tents of Arabs have in all ages been the same. They are commonly large, and held up by nine poles in three rows, on which rests a covering of coarse camel's hair cloth, or ox hides sewn together, often not reaching the ground. The ropes which hold this in its place are fixed to pegs driven into the earth by a huge wooden

¹ *Septuagint*.

² Ps. lxxxiii. 10.

³ *Tent Work*, p. 69.

mallet, and, all round, are suspended rough hangings, which can be removed at pleasure, or are left to form a screen. The tent is divided into two parts, separated by a carpet which hangs from the middle poles: the one on the left, in entering, being reserved for the men; the other, on the right, forming the women's chamber. In this are gathered the cooking utensils, the skin water-bottles, the milk, the butter, etc. The bed, as usual in the East, is only a mat or two laid on the ground, or on a bank of earth raised at the side of the tent; the cloak worn by day serving as a covering by night.¹

Such, no doubt, was the tent of Heber. At its doorway Sisera found Jael, the sheik's wife, and, trusting to the peace between Jabin and the tribe, asked her for passing shelter. Whether she intended treachery from the first, cannot be known. Receiving him graciously, she not only offered him the protection he asked, but took him into her own division of the tent, which no man would think of entering in search of him.² But her next act looks like premeditated betrayal. The Arabs have a delicious preparation of curdled milk, called "Lebben," which is offered to guests as a delicacy; but whilst most refreshing to a traveller who is tired and hot, it also acts as a strong and speedy soporific.³ On the request of the fugitive, for water to quench his overpowering thirst, Jael eagerly brought him a draught of Lebben, in a special dish, the pride of her tent;⁴ not,

¹ Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins, etc.*, vol. i. pp. 37-43. Bonar, *The Desert of Sinai*, p. 399. See Illustration, page 206 of this volume.

² Pococke writes, "I was kept in the harem for greater security, no stranger ever daring to come into the women's apartment, unless introduced. See p. 389, note 3.

³ *Tent Work*, p. 70.

⁴ Jud. v. 25.

perhaps, without the knowledge of its sure effect in casting the drinker into a deep and long sleep. The inviting beverage finished, the weary man lies down, doubtless grateful to his benefactor, and uttering many thanks in his feeling of perfect safety, as Jael carefully covered him with a cloak. He had partaken of Arab hospitality and had her repeated assurances that she would keep his presence secret. But the sight of the great foe of Israel, a race of her own blood, asleep before her, as he presently was, soon raised far other thoughts than he had dreamed possible—if, indeed, she had not entertained them before. What a service it would be if she could free her kindred people from their oppressor! Nor did the suggestion long wait for the act. Taking up one of the tent pegs, and the mallet used to drive it, she crept up silently to her victim, sunk in the sleep of the weary, and with a terrible blow drove the bolt, crashing, through his temples, with such force that it entered the ground on which he had been lying. One convulsive bound and a contortion of agony and he was a lifeless corpse. “Between her feet” (as she strode over him), says the Song of Deborah, “he sank, he fell down, he lay dying.”¹

The results of Deborah’s victory were felt in many directions. No other battle needed ever after to be fought with the Canaanites; and the Israelites themselves learned a lesson of the advantages of national union, which influenced their whole future. Their self-reliance, moreover, was strengthened; for it was their first great victory since the days of Joshua, and they had gained it against the most discouraging odds. As a lesson in war it was invaluable, and its results quickened the passion for freedom which already had begun to root itself in the

¹ Jud. v. 27.

heart of Israel. Nor was it without a powerful effect on their religious history that their national degradation and misery had ended as soon as they abandoned idolatry, and sought the favour and help of Jehovah. That the result was due to Him and not to themselves, however valiantly they had fought, was not only proudly owned, but enshrined in the poetry of the nation, as the prevailing note of the odes and lyrics which an occasion so august called forth. Thus, the magnificent "Song of Deborah" opens with its acknowledgment, and it forms the key note throughout.

That the leaders acted as became them in Israel,
That the people showed themselves valiant,¹
Praise ye Jehovah!

Hear O ye Kings! give ear O Princes;
I to Jehovah, even I, will sing;
I will sound the harp to Jehovah, Israel's God!

Jehovah! when thou wentest forth from Seir,
When thou marchedst hither from the land of Edom,
The earth trembled and the heavens streamed down;

The clouds poured forth waters;
The mountains melted before Jehovah—
Sinai (flowed down) before the face of Jehovah, before the God of
Israel!

The guilt of Meroz was, that it did not come to the help of Jehovah, and the victory is over His enemies. The dimly felt honour of being the people of God thus first took an articulate form, and henceforth became a mighty power in the nation.

¹ Paulus Cassel translates the first two lines;

"That the long hair of the valiant hung wild on Israel
In the consecration of the people—Praise Jehovah!"

But this seems very fanciful.

A striking parallel to the victory of Deborah is recorded by Plutarch in his *Life of Timoleon*. That general, at the battle of the Crimesus, had attacked the Carthaginians; but their heavy armour and stout shields easily repelled the Greek spears. Suddenly, however, when it had come to sword thrusts, violent peals of thunder, and vivid flashes of light burst from the mountains, and the darkness which had been hovering about the higher grounds and crests of the hills, descended on the place of battle, bringing a tempest of rain, wind, and hail with it, on the backs of the Greeks, but full in the faces of the Carthaginians. The rain beating on them and the lightning dazzling them, distressed the inexperienced; and in particular the claps of the thunder, and the noise of the rain and hail beating on their arms, prevented them from hearing the command of their officers. In addition to this, the very mud was a great hindrance to the Carthaginians, who were loaded with heavy armour; and their shirts, underneath, getting drenched, the foldings about the bosom filled with water, and grew cumbersome to them as they fought; making it easy for the Greeks to throw them down, and impossible for them to rise again, with weapons in their hands. The river Crimesus, also, swollen, partly by the rain, and partly by the stoppage of its course from the numbers passing through it, overflowed its banks, and the level ground on its sides was filled with rivulets and currents that had no certain channel, in which the Carthaginians stumbled and rolled about, and found themselves in great difficulty? ¹

As the most ancient of Hebrew lyrics, Deborah's song has a supreme interest. The following is a literal version of the part of it not already quoted.

¹ Plutarch, *Timoleon*. *Dryden's Translation*.

In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,¹ the roads lay idle,
And wanderers went round about by secret paths.

Leaders² had ceased in Israel; there were none
Till thou didst arise, O Deborah, as leader:
Till thou arose as Mother in Israel.³

They chose new holy judges:
Then were the gates of (the enemy's) towns taken by storm,
Though neither shield nor spear could be seen
Among forty thousand of Israel.

My heart thanks you, ye leaders of Israel,
And you brave ones who freely offered yourselves from the people;
Praise ye Jehovah (with me)!

Ye who ride on white dappled she asses;
Ye who sit on fine carpets;
And ye (poor ones) that walk on the roads,
Sing ye!

Clear rising from the sweet singers, where they water the flocks,
Let men praise the righteous deeds of Jehovah;
The righteous deeds of His leading in Israel,
For then did the people storm the gates of their foes.

Up then! Up then! Deborah!
Up then! Up then! sing the song of battle!
Up, Barak! and lead back thy captives,
Thou son of Abinoam!

Then a small band of chiefs and of the people rushed down:
Jehovah, Himself, went down, to my help, amongst the mighty;
From Ephraim (came) those whose root is in Amalek,⁴
After them, Benjamin, thou with thy people!

¹ Some unknown person. It speaks of the past and cannot refer to the wife of Heber. For Deborah's song, see Jud. v. 2-31.

² Herder has "popular assemblies" instead of "leaders."

³ Graetz.

⁴ The hills of Amalek; the old name of the hills of Ephraim.

The leaders came down out of Machir,¹
 And from Zebulun those who held the rod of the chief;
 And the princes of Issachar, with Deborah;
 Issachar pressed close behind Barak, on foot, into the valley.

By the streams of Reuben there are great consultations!
 Why lingerest thou, in the sheep folds, to hear the strains of the
 pipe?

By the streams of Reuben are great consultations!

Gilead stays on the other side Jordan;
 And Dan—why drawest thou thy boats to the beach?²

Asher sits by the edge of the sea
 And clings to his harbours.
 Zebulun is a people throwing away his life to the death,
 And Naphtali—on the heights of the land!

The kings came—they fought,
 The kings of Canaan delivered battle
 At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo.

—But not even a piece of silver have they won!
 The skies themselves fought (for us),
 The very stars, from their paths, fought against Sisera.³

The stream Kishon washed them away,
 The brave stream—the stream Kishon!
 Step forth now, my soul, with pride!⁴

¹ Manasseh. Machir is usually Eastern, but, here, it includes Western Manasseh, also.

² Graetz.

³ "The season was probably that of the autumn storms, which occur early in November. At this time the meteoric showers are commonest, and are remarkably fine in effect, seen in the evening light at a season when the air is specially clear and bright. The scene presented by the fiery falling stars, as the defeated host fled away by night, is one very striking to the fancy, and would form a fine subject for the artist's pencil." *Tent Work*, p. 70.

⁴ Vigouroux makes this line—"And I have trampled under foot the strong."

Then stamped the hoofs of the horses,
In the swift flight of the mighty ones!

"Curse ye Meroz," cried the messenger of Jehovah,
"With a curse curse her inhabitants,
Because they did not come to the help of Jehovah,
To the help of Jehovah, among the heroes!"

Blessed above women be Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite—
Blessed above women, in the tent!

He begged for water, she gave him milk:
In the bowl of the sheik she banded him cream:
But she stretched out her hand to the tent pin;
Her right hand to the hammer of the workman,
And hammered Sisera; shivered his skull;
Broke it in pieces; pierced through his temples!
Between her feet he drew himself up, he fell, he lay;
Between her feet he drew himself up, and fell—
Where he drew himself up, there fell he, dying.

Behind the window lattice ajar, looks out
The mother of Sisera, and frets—
"Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why are its wheels so slow?"

The wisest of her ladies answer her
—She herself repeating the words—
"For certain they have found and are dividing the spoil
—A girl, ay, two girls, for each man;
Plunder of rich coloured stuffs for Sisera—plunder of embroidered
rich coloured stuffs, for the neck of his queen!
A coloured twice embroidered piece for the neck of his queen!"

So perish all thine enemies, Jehovah!
But may they that love Him be like the sun when he rises in
his might!

A difficulty has been found by some in the praise
given by Deborah to Jael for what must be held,
according to our better light, a treacherous murder. But

it cannot be just to transfer to remote and rude nations, in which ideas of morality were necessarily imperfect, the standard gradually accepted by ourselves, eighteen centuries after the higher revelation of Jesus Christ. Nor is there any Divine sanction of Jael's deed, though Deborah, in the exultation of victory, may have seen only its bearing on the freedom of her people.





CHAPTER XVI.

GIDEON TO SAMSON.

THE dates of the incidents recorded in the Book of Judges are necessarily perplexing, since some of them may have been contemporaneous; but we cannot be wrong in assigning, if only from internal evidence, the rise of Gideon, the greatest of all the Judges, to a period considerably later than that of Deborah.

The story of the past had painfully repeated itself. Peace and prosperity had lowered the moral tone of the tribes, and time had softened that abhorrence of idolatry which had been kindled by the enthusiasm of Deborah. Disunion, and the virtual lapse of all government, had made the tribes an easy prey to any vigorous foe whom the attractions of their territory, or the lust of conquest, might bring against them. And such an enemy too soon appeared.

The scourge of God by which He was, this time, to bring them to a better mind, was an invasion of the Arab tribes of the deserts east and south of Palestine: the Midianites, who had gradually spread northwards from the Peninsula of Sinai;—and the old enemies of Israel, the Amalekites, whom they had fought at Sinai; by whom they had been defeated at Hormah in their first attempt to enter Palestine; who in alliance with Ehud,

the Moabite, had oppressed Benjamin, but whose lands in Central Canaan, Ephraim had now made its own. With these, moreover, were joined a number of other Arab tribes known as the Sons of the East. The plains and valleys of Palestine had in all ages been the very "gates of Paradise" to these dwellers in the waste, as indeed they still are to their descendants. Banding together in a vast host of 120,000 men "that drew sword,"¹ they now streamed over the fords of the Jordan, year by year—migrating thither, with their households and herds, in such numbers as could only be compared, by those whom they invaded, to a flight of locusts; which, indeed they rivalled in destructiveness.² The results to the country may be judged from those of similar Bedouin inroads, on a small scale, in our own day. A few years ago the whole Ghor, or depressed channel of the Jordan, was in the hands of the fellahin, or peasants, and much of it was sown with corn. Now, the whole of it is in those of the Bedouins, who eschew all agriculture, excepting in a few spots cultivated, here and there, by their slaves. The same thing is going on all over the plain of Sharon, where, both in the north and south, land is going back to a state of nature, and whole villages vanishing from the face of the earth. Since 1838 no fewer

¹ Jud. viii. 10.

² The Rev. F. W. Holland says of the locusts, while still young and without wings, that he has seen troops of them, in Palestine, covering the ground for a mile in length and 20, 30, or even 50 yards across. When they approach a village in their steady and constant advance, the people turn out, light fires round their fields, dig trenches and fill them with water, and try to beat the swarming thousands back with their cloaks and branches of trees, but in spite of all they swarm up the trees and strip them of every green leaf, and crunch up every blade in the gardens on their line of march. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 317.

than twenty have been thus erased from the map, and their scanty population extirpated.¹ Except on the eastern branches, there is not now a single inhabited village in the whole plain of Esdraelon, and not more than a sixth of its soil is cultivated. The peasants prefer an hour's hard climb to a safe home in the hills on each side, to living in the open, which wild Arabs ever and anon scour on their fleet horses, in hope of plunder. In Gideon's day their inroads were not only on a gigantic scale, but were systematically repeated each summer; the standing grain being trampled under foot and eaten by their flocks and camels, which were let loose on them; the threshed crops carried off, and, also, all the sheep or oxen or asses they could find, over the wide stretch from Esdraelon to Gaza, in the distant south-west.

War has always been cruel, but it was infinitely more so in antiquity than now, nameless and awful as are the sufferings it entails at the best. The story of Saneha, which is at least as old as the days of Abraham, tells us how it was waged even in the petty raids of chief on chief.

"Every land," says he, "which I visited, I caused to yield
Of the forage of its pastures. I divided its cattle among my
men,
I took away its women and children as slaves:
I smote the men."²

* * * *

He wished to divide my cattle
Among the troop of his followers:³
He wished to take from me my oxen, bulls and goats.

* * * *

¹ Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 494.

² *Story of Saneha*, 150-153.

³ *Ibid.*, 166, 167.

I devoted his wives to Mentu (the Egyptian god of war),
 I took his goods, I divided his cattle (among my men),
 I took possession of the things that were in his house,
 I stripped his chamber;
 I got great treasure and wealth, I got much cattle.¹

No wonder that the Israelites betook themselves to the fissures and clefts of the hills, hollowed out by the torrents, and to the natural caverns and fastnesses in the rocks.²

The vast host was under two emirs, Zebah "the man-killer;" and Zalmunna, "the pitiless,"³ with two subordinate sheiks, Oreb, "the raven;" and Zeeb "the wolf;"⁴ the four—as they led on their wild followers—arrayed in scarlet cloaks,⁵ like the sheiks of to-day, with gold chains and crescent-shaped ornaments round the necks of their camels, and on their own persons; their hordes, as well as themselves, wearing gold ear-rings, and their wives and daughters nose jewels, also.⁶ Mounting from the depths of the Jordan valley, probably by the Wady El Jalud, past the meadows of Bethshean, their first attraction on the west of the river, they pitched their tents far and near on the east end of Esdraelon, from Gilboa westwards. Such a host, on a smaller scale, is described by Leslie Porter,⁷ as seen by him in the spring of 1857, when the Bedouin sheik, Akeil Agha, assembled his men in Esdraelon, after the massacre of the Kurds at Hattin, to divide the plunder. "They spread over the plain, countless as locusts; their camels beyond number, like the sands on the seashore. When I looked at the

¹ *Story of Saneha*, 205, 208-212.

² Jud. vi. 2.

³ Lit., "Shadow is denied."

⁴ Similar names are still common among the Arab chiefs east of the Jordan.

⁵ Jud. viii. 26.

⁶ Jud. viii. 25, 26.

⁷ *Handbook for Palestine*, p. 346.

wild and fierce crowds of this disorderly army,—on the spoils and booty,—it seemed as if I had before me the very spectacle of the great invasion of the Midianites in the days of Gideon.”

Prophets¹ had been sent to Israel urging its sons to return to Jehovah, as the only means of averting this calamity, but the land had been wasted for seven successive years before they listened to them, and penitently sought the one great Deliverer—often tried and never failing—the God of their fathers. Then, at last, the ever Merciful raised a helper for them.

Among the clans or “thousands” of western Manasseh, one of the poorest² was that descended from Abiezer, a son of Gilead, the grandson of the patriarch Manasseh;³ but in the households of this humble sept, that of Joash seems to have held a foremost place. He had boasted of a family of magnificent sons, “each like the son of a king;”⁴ but all, save the youngest, had fallen on Mount Tabor, in endless fights with these Midianites.⁵ Thus the seven years of misery had not passed in weak submission, though the brave spirits of the land had only lost their lives in the vain struggle. Even the youngest son, Gideon, “the tree-feller,” that is, the impetuous warrior, had already earned such a name as “a mighty man of valour,” that the Midianites themselves were afraid of him.⁶ His home and fields were at Ophrah, on the very scene of the invasion, and he already had grown sons,⁷ and a separate household, with his own body of slaves, and even an armour bearer.⁸

Modest, like all truly great men, Gideon had not thought

¹ Jud. vi. 7.

² Perhaps “poorest” means “feeblest.”

³ Josh. xvii. 2.

⁴ Jud. viii. 18.

⁵ Jud. viii. 19.

⁶ Jud. vii. 14.

⁷ Jud. viii. 20.

⁸ Jud. vi. 27; vii. 10.

of heading a general revolt, till roused directly by God to do so. A vision appeared to him under circumstances illustrating the sad state of the times. He was at the moment busy threshing wheat cut down almost before it was ripe—his extemporized threshing-floor, the ground by his rock-hewn wine press, which was known in those days from “the terebinth,”¹ that rose grandly before it. The wine press itself, with its huge hollow for the grapes, was his rude barn, to preserve the grain from the Arabs. As in the case of Moses, a miracle finally overcame the self-distrust which, in his humility, had hitherto kept him back.

That very day saw the reality of the “new spirit from God,” with which, as the narrative tells us, he was clothed.² Building an altar on the spot hallowed by the visit of the angel, he dedicated it to Jehovah-Shalom—“Jehovah (who brings) better days.”³ Joash, his father, had so far yielded to the evil ways of the time, as to have built an altar to Baal, on the top of the cliff in which was the wine press, and also an Asherah⁴ at its side, but the new altar to Jehovah could not tolerate such abominations near it. Waiting till darkness fell, Gideon bravely threw down the one, with the help of ten of his slaves, and not only cut down the other, but split it up for fuel; and having laid it on the altar of Jehovah, used it to consume, in sacrifice to Him, a bullock which his father had apparently consecrated to Baal. But the brave deed was like to have cost him dear; for the people of Ophrah, still afraid of their idols, would fain have stoned him, when they discovered it, and were only kept from doing

¹ Jud. vi. 11.

² Jud. vi. 34.

³ Lit., “Jehovah-peace.”

⁴ A rough wooden pillar—part of the stem of a tree—the symbol of the goddess of fertility.

so by the clever irony of Joash, who reminded them that if Baal were a god he would defend himself.¹

Meanwhile, the annual invasion of the Arab host had taken place, but Gideon was now prepared. Sounding the war trumpet through his district, his own clan of Abiezer at once rallied to him. Messengers were then sent through all Western Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, the tribes nearest Esdraelon, and they also obeyed its summons. But the strength of the enemy, and the failure of previous efforts against them, made even ■ Gideon still hesitate. All irresolution, however, was at last removed by a double sign of the presence and help of Jehovah—the wet fleece² and the dry—signs, says Ewald, illustrating Gideon's own character; warm and zealous, while all around were indifferent and cold; calm and cool, when all around were excited.³ No fewer than 33,000 men had answered his call to battle, but he felt that so many were not needed, at least for the first attack. Proclaiming through the host that all who were fainthearted were free to depart, no fewer than 22,000 withdrew. But even the 11,000 left were more than were needed for a victory in which Jehovah was to make bare His arm. At the foot of

¹ The name "Jerubbaal," given henceforth to Gideon, means, according to Ewald, "The Contender for God;" Köhler makes it, the "Contender against Baal."

² The copiousness of the dew in Palestine is amazing. "It costs us as much trouble," says Irwin, "to protect ourselves from the dew by night, as from the heat by day. So heavy is it that in the morning the coverings under which we had lain are as wet as if they had been dipped in the sea." Rosenmüller, *Alte und Neue Morgenl.*, vol. iii. p. 32. Often, says Furrer, the dew is so heavy that the tents seem in the morning to have been soaked with heavy rain. *Bib. Lex.*, vol. v. p. 496.

³ Ewald, vol. ii. p. 542.

Mount Gilboa, in the north-west of Esdraelon, flows even now a copious spring, known as Ain Djaloud, formerly Ain Harod, "the Spring of Trembling," from the scene it witnessed in Gideon's story.¹ It streams from under a huge rock, worn out within to a cavern, and forms a great pool of the purest water, in the shape of a half circle, from which many could drink at once. There are now numbers of little fish in it, and the bottom has at one time been paved, but many of the stones are out of their places. Pouring from this, the water flows in two channels, partly lined with stone, which turn two mills close at hand, and then flow on to the east, to make their way down the steep Wady el Djaloud, to the Jordan.²

To this basin Gideon led his men to drink, and carefully noting who were cool and self-restrained enough, even with the enemy near, to lift the water composedly in their hand as a cup, he selected them as those on whom he could safely trust, sending away all who, in their fear, knelt hurriedly down and dipped their faces in the spring. But the number left him was only 300. With these, however, he determined to assail the innumerable foe; nor were they backward in daring—so high had his spirit and theirs now risen. Providing every man with a horn, a torch, and an earthen pot, he disclosed his plan; that the 300 should divide into three equal companies, and approach the Arab camp from opposite sides in the dead of the night. Then, at a signal from his war horn, all, in a moment, should break their pots and, displaying their blazing torches,³ rush on with the terrible war cry

¹ Lieut. Conder tells us that this spring is also called by the fellahin, Ain el Jem'ain, "the Spring of the Two Troops." *Tent Work*, p. 233.

² Guérin, *Description de la Palestine, Samarie*, vol. i. p. 308.

³ *Beschreibung von Arabien*, p. 304.

of Israel, to the shout of "For Jehovah and Gideon"—
"The sword of Jehovah and Gideon!" The use of the same stratagem strangely reappears in an Arab battle, in the middle of last century, described by Niebuhr; and in Egypt, in our own day, the use of pitchers or pots, to hide lights, is familiar. "The Zabit or Agha of police," says Lane, "in making his nightly rounds, bears a torch which burns without flame, except when waved briskly through the air, but then it lights up at once. The end is sometimes hidden in a small earthenware jar, or covered in some other way, when the flame is not wished to be seen."¹

Everything was now ready, but, for his final assurance, Gideon, by a providential impulse, resolved to make matters doubly sure by venturing with Phurah, his armour bearer, into the camp of the Midianites, in the dead of the night. Stealing down the hill side, therefore, the two crept unnoticed to the outside of the host, which, like all Arab armies had no sentinels. There Gideon had the joy of hearing a man tell his neighbour a dream he had had of a barley cake—the commonest kind of bread—having tumbled into the host of Midian, and coming against the tent of the emir in command, and overthrowing it, so that it "lay along." "That can be nothing else," replied the listener, "than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel—his God has delivered Midian and all our host into his hand."

Returning, with a grateful heart, he now sent off the three companies at once to their posts, and on the signal being given, about eleven o'clock at night,² the hills

¹ Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 120, Fifth Edition.

² The beginning of the middle watch. There were three. From sunset to 10 p.m.; from 10 to 2 a.m.; and from 2 a.m. to sunrise.

around blazéd with three hundred torches, and echoed with the blast of three hundred horns, and the fierce war cries of the assailants. A panic instantly seized the unorganized Arab camp, encumbered with herds and camels, besides women and children. Fleeing for life, amidst wild cries of alarm, each thinking his neighbour an enemy, the vast multitude poured in hideous confusion down the steep descent of Wady el Djaloud, towards the ford of the Jordan, to reach their own side of the stream. But Gideon would not let them escape. The thousands of the northern tribes who had come out to his aid were instantly sent in pursuit; and messengers hastened off through all the hill country of Ephraim, to rouse the men of that great tribe to seize the fords in their territory, and cut off the fugitives. Part had already, however, made their escape for the time, over the ford of Bethabara, just above the entrance of the Djaloud into the Jordan, but Ephraim reached the lower fords in time to arrest the retreat of the great body of the flying hordes, with their two secondary leaders, the sheiks Oreb and Zeeb. The slaughter here was so terrible, that Isaiah speaks of the disaster that overtook the Arabs as only to be ranked with that of Egypt at the Red Sea, or the destruction of the host of Sennacherib.¹ Nor is he alone among the sacred writers, in this estimate of the greatness of Gideon's victory. In imagery, both obvious and vivid to every native of the hills and plains of Palestine, the author of the eighty-third Psalm,² describes the enemy as driven over the uplands of Gilead like the chaff blown from the threshing floors; chased away like the rootless dry weeds which come in rolling globes before the wind, over the levels of Esdraelon and Philistia—as flying with the fierce haste and wild confusion of

¹ Isa. x. 26.

² Ps. lxxxiii. 13, 14.

the flames on a wooded mountain, as they leap from tree to tree and hill to hill, when by chance set on fire in the drought of a tropical climate.¹ Among the rest fell the two leaders; the one at a rock, which henceforth bore his name—Oreb; the other at a winepress, henceforth known as Zeeb.²

Gideon, meanwhile, was no less resolute to make the victory as decisive as possible. He had gained two battles, but a third was needed, and therefore crossing the Jordan, he and his men, "faint, yet pursuing," followed the course taken by Zeba and Zalmunna, the two emirs who had been over all the host, and at last overtook them at Karkor, perhaps near Kenath in the Hauran, and there finally scattered the remnant, numbering 10,000, who had still kept together, and took the two princes alive. Never was deliverance more complete. As we have already seen, the day of Midian "with its confused noise and its garments rolled in blood," was still fresh in the popular mind in the days of Isaiah,³ and the Hebrew poet, in after ages, could find no fitter emblem of the destruction of the enemies of his people, than that their nobles should be made like Oreb and like Zeeb, and their princes as Zebah and as Zalmunna.⁴

So magnificent a triumph raised Gideon at once to the highest honour, and led the tribes who had benefited so greatly by his leadership, to offer him kingly rank, for himself and his family after him. But he was as modest as he was great and brave. The times, indeed, were not yet ripe for monarchy, though the union and strength it would bring were overcoming the aversion of the nation

¹ See *Bib. Dict.*, art. *Oreb*. ² Jud. vii. 25. ³ Isa. ix. 4, 5.

⁴ Ps. lxxxiii. 11. See also 1 Sam. xii. 11. Isa. x. 26. Heb. xii.

to central power. Yet it is certain that few men have ever been fitter for the highest rank. Even his appearance was kingly.¹ He could be stern when necessary, as when he ordered the elders of two towns, Succoth and Penuel, that had refused to give food to his men, in their long pursuit of the common enemy, to be beaten to death with the terrible thorns of the acacia;² but he could be wise and temperate also, as when he calmed the anger of Ephraim³ at not having been summoned to the fight in the beginning, by telling them that their victory, since it slew Oreb and Zeeb, was greater than his own.⁴

The last notice of this great man throws a striking light on the imperfect religious ideas of the times. Instead of the royalty offered him, he had only asked for the golden ear-rings⁵ taken from the Arab host, that he might dedicate them to Jehovah. But he did so in a way that showed the superstitious darkness of the age. No less a weight of gold thus procured than 1,700 shekels had been cast as a cheerful gift on his wide cloak, spread out on the ground to receive it. This he forthwith caused to be made into a gorgeous ephod, to be used by himself, or by a Levite, as an oracle; in superstitious and unauthorized imitation of the ephod of the high priest at Shiloh, from the Urim and Thummim on which Divine responses were given. Henceforth that place was no longer the centre for the northern

¹ Jud. viii. 18.

² Jud. viii. 16. "Taught," in our version, is translated "threshed," in the *Sept.*, *Vulg.*, and by Gesenius and Bertheau.

³ He, a Manassite, could not have hoped that the proud Ephraimites would follow one of his tribe, which they despised.

⁴ Jud. viii. 3.

⁵ Negem = generally nose jewels, but here, in the case of men having worn them, ear-rings. Yet as women also had been among the Midianites, there would be nose jewels also.

tribes. Nor was this all. The ephod seems to have become an object of idolatrous worship, leading the people astray from the service of Jehovah. But in so dark an age, with the Mosaic system so feebly established that Gideon, though not a priest, had himself been divinely ordered to offer sacrifice,¹ it is easy to understand the error of even so staunch a worshipper of Jehovah.

The noble fidelity which declined the crown, because Jehovah was already the rightful king,² found little response in the bosom of some at least of those whom he had so nobly served. It was natural that among his numerous sons, ambition should show itself after his death. He had imitated royalty in one point only—that of having numerous wives; one, a slave woman of Shechem³—a son of whom exhibited a sad contrast to his father. The rich booty of all kinds yielded by the great victory over Midian, had doubtless caused great changes in a people so simple, and introduced a taste for show, and a pride of life, which would especially be seen in the towns. A closer union with the eagerly commercial Phenicians was one of the results; the larger towns becoming more than hitherto marts for Canaanitish merchandise, and homes for colonies of the heathen. Apparently to give these foreigners security for their persons and property, and to protect their caravans, coming and going, leagues were formed, under the sanction of their god, Baal-berith or El-berith, the “protector of the covenant,” and a temple was allowed to be built to him in Shechem,⁴ and perhaps in other towns also.

¹ Jud. vi. 26.

² Jud. viii. 23.

³ Jud. viii. 31.

⁴ Graetz thinks that the league was not one of Israelitish towns among themselves, but rather for the protection of foreigners only. Hence, he says, Gaal and his brethren, who were not Israelites, were only sent away by Abimelech—not punished.

In this growing prosperity local rivalries found a proportionate impulse. Ophrah, which was probably a Manassite town,¹ seemed likely to throw that city, the old capital of Ephraim, into the shade, by the presence and influence of Gideon's sons, who bore themselves, as a whole, worthily of their great father. But Abimelech, his one unworthy son, lent himself only too readily to the jealous hatred of the haughty tribe. Seeing his opportunity for personal advancement in the heated state of local feeling, he planned with his mother's family in Shechem, that the city and its connected towns should choose him for king, and thus raise themselves, finally, above Ophrah. It was better for them, he hinted, to be ruled over by one man than by seventy, the number of Gideon's sons, including perhaps his grandchildren. Besides, he was their "bone and their flesh." The bait took. A subsidy was procured from the temple of Baal in Shechem, and given to Abimelech, and with this he raised a band of men, such as troublous times always produce, ready to do anything required of them. With these he at once began war on his brothers, whom he finally overcame, and ruthlessly put to death—apparently by beheading—on "one stone;" very likely that famous for his father's sacrifice and altar, which would naturally be the local sanctuary.

One, however, Jotham—"Jehovah is perfect"—escaped the massacre, and made his way to Mount Gerizim, which overlooks the broad valley of Shechem,² at the very time

¹ Ophrah is thought by Conder (*Bible Handbook*, p. 221), to be the same as Pirathon or Ferata near Shechem; its old name in the Samaritan Chronicle being Ophrah. But this would make Gideon, a Manassite, have had his home from the first in Ephraim, which yet he did not summon to his aid.

² It is 1,600 feet broad between Ebal and Gerizim. *Rob. Palest.*, vol. iii. p. 316.

when the men of the city and neighbourhood had assembled below, round the oak of "the watchpost," or of "the monument,"—perhaps the memorial erected by Joshua¹—to hail Abimelech as King²; the first in the history of Israel. Suddenly, however, Jotham, who had inherited the sagacity and ready wit of his father and grandfather, presented himself high overhead on one of the rocky spurs that project from Gerizim into the valley, and from its inaccessible security broke forth to the astonished multitude in a striking address; the earliest recorded Parable; forcing them to hear his solemn warning against the course they were pursuing. The imagery he employed was taken from the scene around. In the fables of India and Greece, beasts and birds are supposed to speak or act, but in Palestine the vegetable world is introduced, and in no spot in the land was there such a luxuriance of verdure as at his feet.³ "The trees," said he, "once sought a king, and came in turn to the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine, asking each successively to reign over them. They all, however, declined to exchange their honoured usefulness in bearing fruit, for barren glory. 'Should I,' said the olive, 'the chief of all the trees in the valley of Shechem, leave my fatness, which gods and men extol in me, to wave over the trees?'"⁴ 'Should I forsake my sweetness,' said the fig-tree, 'with its broad green shade, and my good fruit, to wave over the trees?' 'Should I leave my wine, which cheereth gods and man,' said the trailing vine, 'and go to wave over the trees?' But the worthless thornbush

¹ Josh. xxiv. 26. See Bertheau, *Richter*, p. 139.

² The men of Shechem are said to have joined with "all the house of Millo," apparently a "fortress" near Shechem.

³ Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. pp. 348-9.

⁴ Literal meaning.

had no such scruples. It eagerly grasped at the dignity when offered it, and boastingly promised to take faithful subjects under its shadow; as if in its meanness it could protect anything; but threatened to burn up all who resisted it, even the mighty cedars of Lebanon. If," continued Jotham, "your choice of Abimelech, the meanest of my father's sons, for king, be what Gideon's memory deserves, for the victory that freed you from Midian—Abimelech, who has killed all my father's true-born sons but myself—may you find joy in each other! But if it be not, a fire will come from the worthless thorn-bush you have this day raised over you, that will burn you up; ay, and a fire will break out from you that will devour him!" These words uttered, he disappeared, making his way to Beor, apparently in the far off tribe of Benjamin.

The frightful policy by which Abimelech had sought to secure his position, by the murder of his brothers, formed an evil precedent in Israel. Long after, it was repeated by Jehu, in his extermination of Ahab's family,¹ and, by Athaliah in the massacre of Ahaziah's children.² Similar barbarity seems, indeed, to have been familiar to the East in all ages. In Turkey it prevailed till a generation ago, and in Persia it is still the practice to blind the brothers of a Shah, and any other collateral heirs to the throne, at the commencement of a new reign.³ Such a

¹ 2 Kings x. 1-7.

² 2 Kings xi. 1.

³ Lady M'Neil, wife of the late ambassador in Persia, one day saw one of the princes, a boy of ten, with a handkerchief tied over his eyes, groping about the apartment. On asking what he was doing, the lad replied that he knew his eyes would be put out when the king, his father, died, and he was trying what it meant to be blind. His father had had the throne secured to him by his uncle, the former king, having exterminated all the "seed

beginning of Abimelech's royalty showed his character, and he remained true to it throughout. Heartlessly selfish, unprincipled, and unscrupulous, he was not long before he roused his subjects to rebellion. Affecting the king, he had an army, a revenue, and the beginning of an administration, in the person of a viceroy, Zebul, whom he left in charge of Shechem, while he himself moved to Aruma, on the hill top, two or three miles to the north-west.¹ His tyranny, meanwhile, became so insupportable, that bands from Shechem waylaid and plundered all connected with him, whom they could catch, and even tried to entrap himself. Gaal, a Canaanite of Shechem, sent thither from Abimelech with armed men, apparently to put down the townsmen, presently fraternized with them. A merry making at the vine harvest, held in the temple of Baal,² brought matters to a head by a wild traitorous speech of Gaal, in which he proposed to dethrone Abimelech and, as one of the old race, himself to rule over his brethren. This treason Zebul instantly reported to his master, who showed that he inherited the energy of his father, if not his moral worth. Gaal and his men were soon defeated and expelled from the town,³ and a second fight, on the next day, overthrew the men of Shechem and left it in the cruel hands of Abimelech; who, after killing all he could find, threw down the houses, and sowed the ground with salt, as if to curse it and make it barren henceforth. A remnant of the population had, however, fled to a chamber⁴ in the temple of Baal, where they might hope to find a sanctuary. But

royal." In our own day King Thebau, in Burmah, has done the same thing to make his own throne safe.

¹ Van de Velde, *Syria and Palestine*, vol. ii. p. 303.

² Jud. ix. 27.

³ Jud. ix. 41.

⁴ "An hold" = a sunken chamber.

Abimelech knew neither pity nor reverence. Marching with his men to the neighbouring hill, Salmon—"the shady"—he set the example of cutting down a bough with his own hands, and all with him doing the same, the whole returned, and having piled the mass of fuel on the part of the temple where the people were shut in, burned alive about 1,000 men and women.¹

From Shechem he passed on to Thebez, the present Tubas, on the main road, about half way between Shechem and Bethshean, and tried the same plan with its inhabitants, who had fled to a strong tower in the city, after their first defeat. But the curse of Jotham was on his track. As he pressed close to the tower, to help in laying the fuel to burn it, a woman cast down on him an upper millstone and fractured his skull, leaving him only life enough to ask his armour bearer to run him through, to save him the shame of dying by a woman's hand.²

In the wild confusion of the times, Tola, a man of Issachar, perhaps a connection of Abimelech,³ rose next,

¹ The "house of Millo," Judges ix. 20, is understood by Bertheau to have been the name for the stronghold to which the inhabitants of Shechem fled (pp. 46-48). He thinks it was probably on Mount Gerizim. Graetz, on the contrary, considers Migdal Shechem (the tower of Shechem) was a town near Shechem. The "hold," he imagines, was a subterranean entrance, through which Abimelech, like Pelissier with the Arabs in our own day, killed those inside by the smoke. For the hill Salmon, see p. 420.

² So King Pyrrhus was killed at Argos by a heavy tile thrown on his head by the mother of a woman whose son was in danger. Falling insensible from his horse, a Greek presently beheaded him. So, also, at Ceuta, is shown a stone with which a woman from a tower fractured the skull of the Portuguese commander of one of the sieges of the town. Urquhart's *Pillar of Hercules*, vol. i. p. 96.

³ So *Vulg.* and *Sept.*

so far as we know, to the leadership; but nothing is told of his deeds, either in peace or war, except that he defended the northern tribes for twenty-three years from whatever dangers imperilled them. But while on the west of Jordan there was only a struggle for existence, the Manassites or Gileadites, on the east of the river, were enlarging their boundaries. They, also, had suffered from a branch of the Midianites who ranged over the desert slopes beyond the Hauran, but had burst on Gilead each spring, in desolating raids. From these insatiable foes Gideon had delivered them, and his victory had even extended the territory of the tribe. Meanwhile, at its head, stood the Gileadite, Jair—"God gives light"—a vigorous and successful leader, who kept such an approach to royal state that his thirty sons rode, like princes, on as many ass colts. Under him new tracts were won, but what districts his conquests included is not told. They were, however, extensive enough to be known, from the encampments they afforded, as the tent villages of Jair,¹ each of them having one of his sons as its sheik. Beyond this nothing is told of his judgeship.

The Arab patriarchal government, or fragmentary isolation, had now lasted three hundred years, with ever-increasing disaster and anarchy as its result. Everywhere the national spirit was dying away, and the national religion decaying. The tribes were, in part, being lost in the heathen communities around. On the northern border, the idols of Syria² and of Sidon replaced Jehovah, or were worshipped with Him. On the south-west those of the Philistines; and on the east,

¹ Havoth Jair.

² The Hebrew words for "to divine," "to practise magic," "idol priests," and others, similar, are from the Syrian.

those of Moab and Ammon, had many followers.¹ But this apostasy only increased the general misery. East and west, at once, enemies harried them, for they had no strength, such as union gives, to hold their ground. The necessity for a monarchy was being brought home to all. While the Canaanites, under kings, had been steadily recovering national vigour, the Hebrews of the west had decayed; and those of the east were sinking into mere roving shepherds. The old Canaanite race of Ammon, crushed by their forefathers under Joshua, had risen once more to formidable power, and not only lorded it over Gad and Reuben, but, crossing the Jordan, invaded Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. Nor was the western side of the country less harassed, for there the Philistines from the seacoast were plundering and spoiling far and near.

Deliverance was at last effected on the east of the Jordan by Jephthah, a Gileadite of the tribe of Manasseh, whose history and character are a vivid illustration of the dark unsettledness of the age. An illegitimate son, he had been driven from home by his brothers, and thenceforward betook himself to a wild marauding life, on the borders of the tribe, at the head of such a band as evil times make possible. With them he had for years maintained a rough life, levying imposts on weak Ammonite towns, plundering caravans, and surprising villages, like the Arabs of those and later days. His fame, such as it was, had thus gradually spread over Gilead, and led at last, when the bondage to Ammon grew unendurable, to a deputation of elders being sent him to implore his return, to head a rising.² But his

¹ Jud. x. 6.

² The Hebrews who sent this deputation had gathered to select a leader for the proposed rising. They "encamped" at Mizpeh—

wild haughty soul had felt deeply his expulsion, and he would only consent to come back on the solemn oath, sworn on the altar of the local sanctuary at Mizpeh,¹ that if he freed the land, he—the banished one—should be its ruler for life. On this condition he put himself at the head of the tribe, and after fruitless attempts at negotiation, burst on the enemy with such fury that he swept them before him over the uplands, from Minnith, near Heshbon, to the Meadow of the Vines, near Rabbah, and took from them twenty towns.²

The messages Jephthah had sent the Ammonites show that the great deeds God had wrought for Israel in former days, had been handed down among the tents of the eastern tribes, and doubtless in the homes of the western, from generation to generation, as cherished traditions, which might yet bring back the nation to its ancient religious life. But contact with Moab and Ammon, and the worship of their sanguinary gods along with Jehovah, or in His stead, had given Jephthah a creed in which zeal for God was darkly mingled with heathen ideas, borrowed from the rites of Chemosh; whom he seems to have recognized as in some sense a true divinity.³ In the excitement of anticipated battle,

generally, "The Mizpeh"—the Watch-tower, doubtless the spot on a hill top where Jacob had erected his boundary mark between himself and Laban. It had become a local sanctuary and place of national assembly.

¹ Religious disintegration had gone so far that, instead of the one authorized centre of worship at Shiloh, there was The Mizpeh in the east, Ophrah in Manasseh, Dan in the north, and Gilgal on the Jordan, with perhaps others.

² The phrase, "The Spirit of the Lord coming on Jephthah," is explained in the Talmud as "Force of mind for great undertakings, and bodily strength," being granted him: a sense which has a deep and wise meaning.

³ Jud. xi. 24.

he had vowed to devote as a burnt offering to Jehovah "whomsoever"¹ should come out of the doors of his house to meet him on his triumphal return, if victory were granted him. He had been accustomed to see human sacrifices offered to Chemosh, and knew how Balak long ago, in the extremity of his terror, had proposed to burn his eldest son.² Religious teaching of a purer kind he had had none, for Shiloh was far away in Ephraim, with which Gilead had in these centuries ceased to have any relations of friendliness. In his fierce superstitious ignorance he fancied, doubtless, that a slave, if the first to greet him as he came back, would be pointed out, by the fact of his doing so, as a specially acceptable sacrifice to Jehovah. But as it happened, the news of his splendid deeds had outrun his approach to Mizpeh, and his only child—a young daughter—in her pride at her father's glory, had prepared a welcome for him, with the songs and dance with which heroes returning from war were met, and this, in her innocent joy, she led.³ The bearing of father and daughter in so sad a calamity is equally striking. He is crushed by its greatness; but she rises with a noble grandeur of soul above her own sorrow, and, in her darkened conceptions of God, almost glories that He has granted the victory, even at the price of her sacrifice.⁴ She only asks that she be left for two months to bewail her early unmarried death—so sad to Hebrew women—in the lonely depths of the mountains. Then comes the last awful scene: "He did with her according to his vow." No wonder that such a story should linger in the popular memory, and that, for generations after, the maidens of the land, in sympathy

¹ Literally so. Judg. xi. 31. ² Micah vi. 7. ³ Judith xv. 12, 13.

⁴ Her grand submission shows how deeply rooted in that age was the idea that human sacrifice was due to the gods.

with such a victim of mistaken devotion—the first and last human sacrifice offered by well-meaning ignorance to Jehovah—should bewail her fate, and praise her grand resignation to it, on the hills which had witnessed her last days.¹

Only one other incident is told of Jephthah's rule, but it marks his character in its darkest shades. He had asked aid from the haughty tribe of Ephraim, west of the Jordan, in his great struggle with Ammon, and they had refused it. But, quarrelsome as they were proud, they no sooner heard of his victory, than they sent an insolent message to him, asking why he had not sought their help, and telling him that they would burn his house with fire for not having done so; backing their words by invading Gilead with a huge force. Statesman-like and gentle, Gideon had, in a similar case, soothed angry passions by soft words; but Jephthah returned defiance for defiance, and marched out to drive them back. It was hard, indeed, for the wounded pride of Gilead to stand the taunt, that they had fled from the Ammonites into Ephraim and into Western Manasseh;² hard because it was probably true; but an evil like civil war was worth avoiding by at least an attempt at the restoration of friendship. In the battle that followed, Ephraim, with all its boasting, was defeated, and then came a dire crime. Hurrying his men to the fords of the Jordan, Jephthah ordered them to kill every fugitive Ephraimite seeking to cross. To pronounce a given test-word, Shibboleth, as Sibboleth, was enough. Whoever did so was remorselessly killed as belonging to Ephraim. How

¹ It is to be noticed that while the usual title of a "Judge" was Shophet, an adoption of the Phenician word for a chief magistrate—that given to Jephthah is Katzia—a leader.

Jud. xii. 4.

savage and revengeful the soul, that in such a quarrel carried out its hatred by slaughtering, as he did, by this test, 42,000 of his brethren !

The low ebb to which Israel had sunk in her eastern tribes had its counterpart in the south-west. A new enemy, destined to give huge trouble in the future, was now rising into strength. The Philistines, though mentioned in the distant times of Abraham, and already forming a confederacy of five cities in the Maritime Plain in the days of Joshua, holding it from "the river of Egypt" to "Ekron,"¹ had risen to formidable strength as an aggressive power, apparently only in the later part of the age of the Judges. Their name, from which that of "Palestine" is derived, means "the strangers" or immigrants;² and as they are several times called Cherethites³ in Scripture, their original home has been assumed by some to have been the island of Crete, which this name seems to indicate. Others have held that they must have passed from Cyprus to Palestine, the name of that island sounding something like Caphtor—the locality given as their former home in Genesis.⁴ There seem, indeed, to have been successive arrivals, the last in the time of Rameses III., who was reigning about the year B.C. 1200,⁵ that is, about the time of Jephthah.⁶ An

¹ Josh. xiii. 3 ; xv. 4, 47.

² It is *lit.* Plischti, which Maspero notes as recalling Pelasgi.

³ In Hebrew, "Crethi," which is translated in the Targum of Jonathan by "bowmen."

⁴ See vol. i. p. 247.

⁵ *Brugsch*, vol. ii. p. 9.

⁶ Conder's *Handbook*, p. 19. Lengerke recognizes the Philistines as Semitic. *Kanaan*, p. 195. So, Munk, *Palästina*, p. 199. He thinks they first came from Egypt, as a migration from the Semitic colonies of the Delta. Hitzig says they were related to the Greeks. Sayce tells us that Phenicia was *Keft* in Egyptian,

attack on Egypt by Philistines, among other tribes, had been driven back by that prince, but many of the invaders, instead of returning to their own countries, had preferred to enter the service of their conqueror, as mercenaries; the Philistine part of them obtaining permission to settle among their brethren of earlier immigrations, in the south-west of Palestine; to guard Egypt from the north.¹

The territory thus reinforced by such a military colony, commanded the passes to the mountain home of Israel. Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, its five cities, had long been famous, but now became dangerously strong. Thothmes III., Seti I., and Rameses II., had kept garrisons of Semitic mercenaries at Gaza,² and the last of these monarchs had stormed and taken Askelon, after a rebellion, about the same time as Deborah overthrew Sisera on Esdraelon.³ The original population—the Avites⁴—had long been degraded to the service of these fierce masters, who, however, had adopted their language and their religion. In Joshua's day, the cities of the Philistine plain are not included in the lists of those held by Judah, though their district had been assigned to that tribe.⁵ The fear of rousing Egypt, and the strength of the Philistines, had, in fact, kept Israel from attempting their conquest, and hence the Anakim,⁶ chased from Hebron, and the Amorites, dispossessed of their mountains, found a safe refuge behind the walls of their cities, which became gradually the centres of small

and *Keft-ur* (Caphtor), "Greater Phenicia," the name of the Delta, from the Phenician settlements in it.

¹ *Maspero*, p. 302.

² *Papyrus Anastasi*, III. pl. v. 6.

³ *Conder*, p. 19.

⁴ Avites—dwellers in the Ivvah or lowlands. *Lengerke*.

⁵ Josh. xii. 12. ⁶ Anakim—the long-necked. *Lengerke*, p. 183.

principalities, governed by a military chief bearing the title of Seren, or sometimes, as at Gath, of king. These five dignitaries acted together, as heads of a confederation; offered in common the public sacrifices, and made war in concert, at the head of their respective contingents; their principal force consisting of chariots, and archers whose skill was proverbial in Israel.¹

Such was the nation with which Israel was to wage war with a splendid tenacity for the next hundred years. About this time, in the Providence of God, a child was born, who was destined to rouse his countrymen to their long struggle for independence, if not during his life, at least by his ever growing fame after his death. The birth of Samson is the opening of a new period, which culminated in the reign of David, but, as such, it belongs to the glorious age it introduced, rather than to the gloomy past which it in a manner closed.

¹ See on this whole subject, Starke, *Gaza und die Philistäische Küste*. Hitzig, *Die Philistäer*, Jena, 1852.



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